

**TIMES OF THEIR LIVES**  
**A CENTURY OF WORKING-CLASS WOMEN**

Pat Straw

Ph.D  
University of Edinburgh

1985



# UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS (Regulation 7.9)

Name of Candidate PAT STRAW  
Address DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, 13 BOCELOCH PLACE  
Degree PH.D Date 17 NOV 1988  
Title of Thesis TIMES OF THEIR LIVES A CENTURY OF WORKING-CLASS WOMEN  
.....  
No. of words in the main text of Thesis 90,000

This thesis looks at social change among working-class women in Scotland, over the last hundred years, by using oral history evidence from four generations. Six multi-generational families form part of this generational structure.

I wanted to move away from commonly used perspectives on working-class culture and as a consequence decided to discuss my material by using a socio-temporal framework.

The first part of the thesis aims to present a theoretical discussion about 'social time'. The second part consists of the ethnographic component, women's life stories. And the final part analyses this oral history in terms of the initial general statements to produce salient conclusions about the nature of working-class culture as it appeared among certain families in Falkirk at the beginning of the 1980s.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and that the work it contains is entirely my own.

**DEDICATED TO**

my mum and dad

and to the memory of

**Rosella Taylor**



## Acknowledgements

I've been working on this thesis, and agonising over it, for more years than I care to remember and now I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the people who helped me through all the years. Some are painfully aware of their contributions and support, others probably not so aware. They all at various times provided smiles, harsh words, shoulders to cry on, beds, food, money. They kept me normal(ish).

It would be an understatement to say there are a lot of people to give my thanks, and most of all my love. So, here goes. First of all I would like to thank all my relatives, who are too numerous to mention individually, for providing me with the best training a sociologist could ever wish for.

I would like to say "taa" individually to Brian Elliott, Marjory and George Straw - my mum and dad, Phil - my brother, Julie Carter, Steve Kendrick, Frank Bechhofer, Dave McCrone, Alan and Barbara and Andrew, Jane Staley, Mr and Mrs Staley, Pari and Gordon, Maggie Holden, Mel Gouldner, Andrea Gilbert, John Breward, Mrs Breward, Tom Smith, Rebecca Good, Jill Manson, Sam, Sue and Graham and family, Jeremy Adler, Mick and Sue and Toby, Mr and Mrs Kendrick, Robin and Michelle Kendrick, Sue and Alan, Kate Kinnimont, Sue and Jeff and Neil, Geoff and Helen, Roger

Smithurst, Roger Johnston, Pete Small, Bill Gilby, Dave Wright, Tim and Jane, Pris and Andy Kendrick, Mr and Mrs Sharkey and all at 16 Chapel Street, Alan Beard, staff and customers at the PGSU - especially Aly and Mrs Carter, staff and customers at the Greenmantle and the Southsider, members of Holyrood St. Giles Labour Party and Edinburgh C.N.D., British Rail staff at Haymarket Station, Carol and Moyra and other loonies in Science Studies department, Mike Barfoot, Worker's Educational Association South East Scotland - especially Colin Kirkwood, Ian Bryant, Falkirk Women's Aid, especially Shirley, Bob and Clare, Violet, Lillian, Terri, Terri, Mary and Margaret, the Research Centre for Social Sciences, Robbie Irvine, Dave Campbell, Alison and Phil and family, Roger and Barbara Mullen and family, all at Bathgate F.E. College, John Holmwood, Rosemary Johnson, Roger Jeffry, Mr and Mrs Perry and Liz, Glyn and Ian and family, Alison McIntosh, Colin Macleod, Ian and Anne, Murdoch Rogers, Bill Knox and ex-members of Southside Oral History Group, Helen and Gavin. Last, but not least; thanks to Pip and Maddy, and Radio Forth.

Above all, I must give my love and thanks to all the girls and women in Falkirk who provided the most invaluable contribution to my work. I am unable to name them for obvious reasons. They know who they are and this thesis will show others what they gave.

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE HIGH HOPES AND FALSE STARTS	6
CHAPTER TWO TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE	42
CHAPTER THREE LIFE-TIME TIMES	67
CHAPTER FOUR LINKING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY	93
ETHNOGRAPHY: INTRODUCTION	111
CHAPTER FIVE 'ALL IN OOR STRIDE'	116
CHAPTER SIX DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPIRE	183
CHAPTER SEVEN DAUGHTERS OF THE DEPRESSION	218
CHAPTER EIGHT DAUGHTERS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR	267
CHAPTER NINE DAUGHTERS OF THE SIXTIES	306
CHAPTER TEN ALL CHANGE?	357
CHAPTER ELEVEN PRECARIOUSNESS, PREDICTABILITY AND POWER	406
APPENDIX SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS (Please read together with Chapters 5-10)	437
BIBLIOGRAPHY	459

## INTRODUCTION

Between 1980 and 1981 I constructed a living history of Falkirk - an oral testimony to a hundred years of continuity and change among the working-class in Scotland, as experienced by women who had once been girls and girls who were becoming women. In age they ranged from nine to ninety; in number they totalled ninety-three. Every one of them had an important story to tell and I am only sorry that I have not been able to include more of their tales in this particular presentation of my material.

During the course of my work I looked at aging and social change in terms of females belonging to ten year age groups, stretching from childhood to old age, as these stood in 1980. However, the major themes and findings of the study have been presented here by using a sub-set of this overall group. The framework employed is that of four generations of women. Further, within this generational structure there appear six families whose members are related to one another somewhere along the continuum daughter-mother-grandmother-great grandmother. It must be stressed, however, that each respondent was treated as an individual encouraged simply to talk about what was important to them. There was no pressure on anyone to concentrate primarily on their families. Interviews were by design completely open-ended and unstructured in nature, apart from the concept of a

life story. I invited respondents to talk about their lives from whichever point in them they wanted to begin and in whatever terms they cared to choose. I wanted to tap people's own relevance structures, their life-worlds and their priorities.

It turned out to be the case that all the women I spoke to defined themselves principally in relation to their family situation, in terms of being one or more of the following - a daughter, a niece, a mother, an aunty, a grandmother, a great grandmother. Young or old, working in outside employment or not, they talked about their lives from the perspective of their home and family experiences. Consequently, my analysis focusses upon working-class life from an individual and family angle.

It is the history of working-class families that have witnessed at least one world war, the coming of the Welfare State, the arrival of affluence, the dawning of 'post-industrial' society - motor cars, motorways, tower blocks, radios, T.V.s, stereos, videos, frozen food, instant food, men on the moon.

Once it was clear that what I had to analyse was women and the family the next problem was how to analyse it. I purposely wanted to move away from commonly used perspectives on working-class culture. The way I felt at this stage in my research is aptly and amusingly summed up by Gregory, following A.A. Milne,



... Winnie-the-Pooh always came downstairs 'bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head; but sometimes he felt "there really is another way", if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it'. (Gregory 1978: 38)

During the fifties when the major community studies were carried out, working-class life came to be portrayed as having certain characteristics which were subsequently taken up and used as parameters for further research and analysis. While not wanting to belittle or dismiss these studies which, on the contrary, I consider to be classic works of British sociology and which have been great inspirations to me, I want to look at the same culture and the same relationships, albeit twenty or thirty years on, by using a different framework. The investigation of working-class life and community needs to move on from the somewhat descriptive and static state it has remained in for several decades. I appreciate that a major attempt to shift the emphasis has been made by numerous Marxists but, whilst I would be a fool to disregard their significant insights, I do feel that they can be criticised for focussing so much on economic considerations. Although these may be the most important part of the story, they are not the whole story, by any means. Economic relations provide the general framework within which the details of the plot unfold. So, in terms of other writing on the working-class, I see my thesis as providing an alternative perspective rather than a critical expose.

In order to describe and analyse the lives of working-class women in Falkirk I decided to use a socio-temporal framework

based upon the distinction between repetitive time and non-repetitive time. It was Edmund Leach, following Evans-Pritchard, who suggested that our modern English notion of time covers, among other things, these two different kinds of experience which are logically distinct and even contradictory. The notion of repetition is that sense of time received from something that repeats, ranging from the ticking of a clock or a pulse beat to the recurrence of days or visits. The notion of non-repetition springs from our awareness that all living things are born, grow old and die. They have a life cycle which is an irreversible process. Involvement in repetitive time implies order and stability in life whereas movement through non-repetitive time engenders constant reminders that existence is fragile and ever-changing.

The first section of the thesis gives a detailed description of how I experienced the research process. Its purpose is to set the scene for what follows by giving a historical account of how my work developed from an original notion about the importance of women in working-class communities. The second section introduces the theoretical component of the work and seeks to explain exactly what is meant by the term 'social time' and within that to define recurrent and non-recurrent sequences. The former involves looking at the rounds of family and community life and the latter concerns itself with generations and aging. It is then important to find out how these patterns and sequences are linked at the individual, familial and societal levels and

how these connections change through time. This marks the culmination of the scene-setting aspect of the thesis and leads us into the ethnographic heart of the work.

The first part of the ethnography appears in the form of a family history. I have chosen one of the families I encountered which contained within it five surviving generations along the female line and allowed four of its adult members to tell their own and their family's story. Using the four generations here as a base I then go on to give a wider account of the times each of them lived through by adding the life stories of other members of their respective age groups.

The final sections of the thesis are concerned with analysing the ethnographic material in terms of the initial theoretical statements to produce salient conclusions about the nature of working-class culture as it appeared among certain families in Falkirk at the beginning of the 1980s.



## CHAPTER ONE

### HIGH HOPES AND FALSE STARTS

This thesis is as much an attempt to be innovative in the presentation of oral history and sociology as to impart new insights about working-class women's culture, because I feel the former to be as important, exciting and challenging as the latter. It also seeks to describe the process, or rather the joys and agonies, of 'doing something' with life history material, and to show that with determination, unfailing support and a love for one's subject and subjects it can be done. Nothing sounds easier than going out with a tape recorder to chat to people about themselves. However . . . read on.

Up until now oral history pieces have been like old photographs, usually fascinating, sometimes cosy sometimes unpleasant, but almost invariably complacent and uncritical of themselves. Oral history had to go to extremes to establish itself as a useful exercise against more 'academic and intellectual' disciplines but now that it has achieved this and its usefulness, even indispensability, to certain enterprises has been recognised it must move on, at least in areas which have been well researched and documented. We need to do more than stare and marvel and describe. We owe it to ourselves and our

disciplines but most of all we owe it to our respondents who have brought sociology and history 'to life' to go beyond the surface level of their words and thoughts.

### Early Formulations

It might be useful rather than superfluous at this point to indicate what sorts of ideas I had at the beginning of my postgraduate career so that I can show how they changed, quite considerably as it happens, out in the field and through the process of interpreting my material. According to vague recollections of writing-up physics and chemistry experiments at school 'the method' should be the easiest, most straightforward chunk in any project. However, unravelling one's research procedure in order to make it accessible to others is frankly very difficult, even with the aid of fieldwork notes and diaries. All I can offer is a reconstructed outline of 'the way it happened' but I must admit that a good deal of what I did was subconscious-follow-your-nose-seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time sort of stuff which wasn't even recorded in my fieldwork books. For better or worse I frequently followed my instincts.

Following on from the success of an undergraduate project about working-class family life and work life, carried out in my home territory of Nottinghamshire; and also, interestingly, following a broken engagement, I embarked on a fairly well-defined thesis which was to look at 'history, biography and

culture' in Nottinghamshire mining communities. This study was designed specifically to concentrate on the experience of working and retired miners, both at work and in the family and community. I had gone quite a long way down this particular road when for some reason, which is no longer very apparent, I began to feel a certain unease with my work and decided that maybe what I should have been focussing my attentions on was the female side of the story. This 'feeling' probably occurred because being back home for long periods made me remember that all through my non-student life it had been my mother and the women around me who always appeared to be the most important members of the family and the community. Together with this went the fact of my broken engagement which had made me take stock of my own and other female's lives. I understood, or perhaps a better word would be 'admitted', that emphasis on the opposite sex with a view to eventually getting married, settling down and having kids had been uppermost in my mind for most of my life despite the fact that here I was, at twenty-four, single and pursuing an academic career. Indeed, it turns out that at the time in an early paper I had written the following paragraph,

For as long as I can remember and until very recently my life has not been a journey of self-discovery, an exploration of my talents as a possible artist, writer, musician, cook, etc., or even a time of conscious educational achievements and scholarship, but rather most of my efforts, energy and concentration have been directed to falling and staying in love, and ultimately 'settling down'. Yes, school dances, youth clubs, cinema, football matches, everything, revolved around fellas. All activities were performed with them in mind. School, degrees, family, friends were all side issues where love was concerned.

'For as long as I can remember' can be read as from the time I was five - had my first boyfriend then, my first Valentine when I was six and my first 'steady' from the age of eight to eleven! I was not unique. As kids, us girls on the estate had one major pastime which occupied all our spare moments - playing 'boyfriends' and 'house'. We'd pair off and the 'male' girl would take the name of our desired at the time. We'd invent a story and then act it out for hours on end. The story was always basically the same - we had married Mr. X at about eighteen and at the age of twenty-one had two or three kids. Fantastic! We then spent an idyllic life caring for hubby and kids, getting 'dolled-up' and going round to each other's houses for tea and chat. That was our ideal for the future, what we longed for and desperately hoped would happen in reality when we 'grew up'. To most of the gang it did, with only minor variations in the tale.

So it was that I decided, unwisely in a lot of respects, to follow my heart's desire once again only this time in a sociological way and find out more about this female culture which had at its centre a total commitment to love and romance. Or had it?

I now intend to quote at some length from another early paper (1979) which was the bridge between my original proposals and the course I later pursued. It is a far cry from where I ended up but I feel it is interesting and instructive to work through the process in these stages. The piece was entitled 'Women in Mining Communities: A Case for Investigation? (The Hidden Injuries of Class and Sex)', and started as follows,

This work begins from the premise that women are a combination of 'class subjects' and 'sex subjects', and aims to investigate their consequent position and consciousness within a context which



may be described as being both archetypically 'working class' (cf. Lockwood's 'traditional proletariat') and archetypically 'patriarchal' - that of a mining community. In much the same way as the 'Affluent worker' group chose to use Luton as being the place which would indicate whether or not 'embourgeoisement' was in fact taking place, I intend to take a clearly demarcated (in class and geographical terms) community as being the place where (1) the class position/subordination of women, (2) their patriarchal oppression and (3) the interaction between (1) and (2) will be displayed most clearly. Thus, a Nottinghamshire mining community will be selected as a 'pure' or ideal-type of situation of working-class women in the advanced capitalist society of Britain in the twentieth century.

Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, in 'Coal is Our Life', showed how extreme the emphasis of gender was in mining communities and although their work is now over twenty years old the rigid separation of 'man's world, woman's place' which they observed seems to have persisted in similar extant communities despite the fact that many women are not so confined by the domestic world or by the biological consequences of their sex.' (1979:1)

The paper then goes on to discuss Dennis, Henriques, and Slaughter's material, together with that of Klein, Zweig, Hoggart, and Young and Wilmott; studies which at least included women but which apart from the latter did not analyse their position in much depth and which were over twenty years old anyway. I go on to note,

Recently it seems that the only sociological studies to afford women a place in their analysis have been Young and Wilmott in 'The Symmetrical Family' (which sees women as having more or less achieved equality with their menfolk), Ann Oakley's three related books stemming from her thesis on housework ('Sex, Gender, and Society', 'The Sociology of Housework', and 'Housewife'), and smatterings from the C.C.C.S. at Birmingham. However, there has been a flood of recent writing upon the 'neglected' area of women stemming not

from sociology but largely from the intellectual feminist groups which arose in the late sixties, plus writing on women's position from mainstream Marxism. This material may be broadly characterised as falling into one of the following categories - Marxist/socialist (or Marxism in an uneasy alliance with Freud and Lacan) or radical feminist. Each one looks at issues which the other one ignores. The radical feminists see the position of women as being the question, so that as far as they are concerned sexism, stemming from human biology, not capitalism, is the main enemy of women. Radical feminism is ahistorical and has no theoretical base. It is descriptive giving full weight to the experience of female oppression. Radicals have failed to realise that although all women in our society are in a subordinate position the situations of different women in different groups or classes are very diverse.

Whereas radical feminists see women as being the question Marxists refer to the 'woman question', seeing the necessity to link women's oppression to what they see as its ultimate historically specific cause which is capitalist society. Many of the Marxist writers are bogged down in a theoretical quagmire and have largely failed to introduce into their writings any empirical observations other than historical ones. Almost all the theoretical works call for an integration of theory with the 'real' world - an examination of women in specific concrete situations - but that's it - things stop at the shouting. When theory is applied empirically it tends to be in not trivial but selected areas, for example, the domestic labour debate, and often gets stuck in analytic and semantic bantering, such as what should or should not be included in Marx's 'theory of surplus value'.

The whole body of feminist literature includes both theoretical and empirical work within its boundaries but very rarely do the two come together, or if they do, they do so unsatisfactorily. At the other extreme from purely theoretical works are studies like Mary Chamberlain's 'Fenwomen' or Rowbotham and McCrindle's 'Dutiful Daughters' which are simply collections of transcripts of what selections of women had to say about various topics. Hardly any attempt is made to explain the outlooks and feelings portrayed by linking them to objective conditions, history, or ideologies about the family, men and women, etc.



Perhaps a Ph.D. thesis is the place to concentrate on what I have criticised, that is, on the details of a specific area of woman's world and to show how theory relates to them rather than attempt to connect theoretical and empirical considerations on a larger scale. However, I would like to look, as far as it is possible, at the 'total world' of women in mining communities, not just at young married women with children, teenage girls, housework, or wage labour but all these and more (childhood, adolescence, marriage relationships, generational relations, reproduction, sexuality, childcare, etc.) to show how they all fit together to form 'working-class woman' and to suggest what sorts of questions should be asked about these areas. A useful starting point might be to take Juliet Mitchell's four areas/levels of Production, Reproduction, Sexuality, Socialisation of children, and expand or add to these as necessary.

I hope to describe as exactly as possible the situation of women in a mining community, and the reasons for their situation, without claiming that this is 'femininity' as it applies to society in general but rather that it is one particular way in which the general ideologies of capitalism - class, sex, gender, patriarchy, reproduction, etc. - appear at this point in time, in one particular group of the population, an example of how capitalism works itself out after passing through specific mediations.

To achieve the above I intend to converse in considerable depth with a relatively small number of women, bearing in mind what Sennett and Cobb wrote about working in this way,

The only way we can generalise is to turn the matter around and ask what is representative or characteristic of (American) society in its impact on the people interviewed. It is not so much as a replication of other workers that their lives ought to bear witness, but as focussed points of human experience that can teach us something about a more general problem of denial and frustration built into the social order.

And, similarly, what Doris Lessing wrote,

The way to deal with the problem of 'subjectivity', that shocking business of being preoccupied with the tiny individual who is at the same time caught up in such an explosion of terrible and marvellous possibilities, is to see him as a microcosm and in this way to break through the personal, the subjective, making the personal general, as indeed life always does, transforming a private experience . . . into something much larger.

I want to study woman as a subject. To see 'what she has to say for herself rather than what others say about her'. I am concerned with what it means 'to a woman to be a woman' and also 'to make people aware of how uncommon it is to actually ask women what they think about themselves' (Fransella and Frost: 9) and what they think about men, for it is this relationship and the perception of it that is all-important.

In conclusion I will point to the pertinent question asked by Elizabeth Janeway,

Why have women so often and so persistently acquiesced in declaring themselves subordinate to men? . . . Why have women preached to women that their role calls for abnegation, withdrawal from a direct confrontation with the world of action, and submission to the male - father, brother, husband, son, lover - who will mediate between them and events? (Janeway: 58)

Perhaps women allow these things to happen because by accepting their position or role gracefully they are finding an all-important identity and this especially in a working-class context. As Janeway herself notes elsewhere in her book,

(she) is not only presented with a self she is given a map of the world and the heavens, and a moral compass to guide herself along its co-ordinates. One can hesitate to take on a new self but it is harder to refuse a whole universe where one's activities are accepted as meaningful and valuable and in which it is clear that this behaviour is appropriate and that is out of place. Most of all it is hard to refuse a set of values that can be trusted to avoid paralysing moral dilemmas . . . though it gives her a mask, it also sets up bulwarks against chaos . . .



better a mask than no identity at all . . .  
we both dislike the limitations of  
traditional, ascribed roles and find in them  
definitions for living which we feel to be  
deeply needed. (Janeway 1979: 21-25)

Following on from this I went on to investigate what I took to be the core of it all and wrote a lengthy paper about love, marriage and the family which was essentially about social myths, a history of love and romance, and a look at how thoughts about love, marriage and the family might show themselves at various stages of the life-cycle. The work took its main cues from Suzanne Brogger, Erich Fromm, Kathrin Perutz and Lee Comer.

As a result of the work described so far I decided to work on a research design that looked at the 'natural history' of working-class domesticity, i.e. at the role of women in a working-class community, stressing that marriage is the institution which serves to define them, to bound their lives. A schematised version of all this was drawn up and is presented below.

#### **PHASES OF WOMANHOOD TO BE CONSIDERED:**

**Learning the myths (of marriage, love and romance) = childhood and adolescence.**

**Confronting the myths = married (all ages), widowed and divorced.**

**Reconsidering the myths = widowed and divorced.**

**At odds with the myths = spinsters.**

**AREAS TO FIND OUT ABOUT IN ALL GROUPS**, bearing in mind attitudes of others; areas of responsibility; changes in attitudes over time.

## **AT HOME**

**Primary relationships** (of wife and husband where appropriate):

(i) in family of origin - with mother and father; brothers and sisters; grandparents; other relatives.

(ii) in nuclear family - with husband and children.

Look at alignments and 'waxing and waning' of relationships.

Work out family tree and look at photo album/family photos.

**Discipline** (and arguments)

Staying out - time for being in/overnight.

Holidays - with friends.

Difference in attitudes to above between mother and father and other relatives, such as grandparents, and did attitudes differ towards male and female children.

Violence in family.

**Womanhood/housework.**

Being a 'wife'; being a 'mother'. What does it mean being a 'wife', etc.

Pregnancy and childbirth.

Stages of children's lives; hopes for kids.

How do thoughts on above change over time?

Look for evidence of isolation, loneliness, coping.

Also in this section look at daily life; day versus evening; week

versus weekend.

### **Housework**

Routine/standards.

Attitudes of others.

Shopping.

Money/wages.

Decision-making.

### **Divorce (where applicable)**

Cause; remarried ?; adjustments of self, children, relations.

### **AT SCHOOL**

Friends - male/female.

Teachers.

Subjects.

Prospects.

Discipline.

### **AT WORK**

Ambitions/prospects.

History of jobs.

Wages/hours.

Bosses.

Friends/work groups

Employment versus housework.

Attitudes of others.

## **AT PLAY**

Female/male activities.

Games as children.

Weddings attended - bridesmaid?

T.V.; magazines/books; records.

Pubs, dances, cinema.

Boyfriends; girlfriends.

Courtship; boyfriend and mates; sexual relations/contraception.  
Love and romance/respect and trust; possession and jealousy.

Engagement.

Marriage - why ?; actual wedding day.

Daily visits to and from friends and neighbours; gossip.

**Other topics to be included in interviews which don't fit easily into above:**

**RELIGION**

**POLITICS**

**SIGNIFICANT EVENTS** - depression; First and Second World War, etc.

**DIGNITY** and degradation

**STORIES AND RITUALS/SYMBOLIC STRUCTURES** - personal 'fictive' history; talking to mother/father; brothers and sisters; husband; children; friends and relations.

**FIRST MEMORIES**

**DID YOU KNOW THAT . . . ?**

e.g.s 40.1% of labour force are women; 1 in 3 women work part-time; some houseworkers earn as little as £5 for a 60 hour week.

**CAN YOU IMAGINE . . . ?**

e.g.s communal childcare; communal laundries etc.

**VIEWS ON . . .**

e.g.s single parent families; sex before marriage; sex education; divorce; lesbianism; Women's Movement; role reversals; abortion.

**WHAT SHOULD I ASK OTHER GROUPS IN SURVEY ABOUT?**

## Scotland and Secretaries

At this stage it was decided for practical reasons, such as nearness to supervisors and libraries, and limited finances, to switch the location of my fieldwork from England to Scotland. The peculiarity of the Nottinghamshire coalfield, which has again been brought to light in 1985, was to have been a major consideration in the original thesis about mining communities but this was no longer crucial once the focus of attention switched from working-class men to working-class women. However, the factor of an 'undiluted' working-class area was still uppermost, and out of several possibilities, with Whitburn, Bathgate and Livingston being strong contenders, Falkirk was chosen. According to the census there had been little in or out migration since the turn of the century in this working-class area of iron foundries. Besides this the town, unlike the other places mentioned, was easily accessible by train, a vital consideration for a researcher who was going to have to rely on a push-bike and a relatively heavy tape-recorder for gathering data.

Before dumping myself in the wilds of Falkirk I decided to carry out a pilot study to help me formulate an interview outline. This particular stage was carried out at Bathgate Further Education College because I had contacts there who could guarantee me quick access to a more or less captive audience. Admittedly it might be assumed that the students there had little in common with the sort of people who were to become my ultimate



sample but the likenesses were sufficient for the task in hand which was to test out vague ideas and theories still evolving in my mind. At Bathgate I had a chance to talk with several different age groups of women because while some students there were obviously school-leavers, or day-release pupils, learning a practical skill or trade, others were mature students, usually working-class housewives and mothers who had gone back to re-train or simply to 'broaden their horizons'. When I got there it turned out that this pilot sample was more appropriate than I could ever have imagined in terms of background. While at the college, besides talking to various groups of women and girls, which included trainee hairdressers, nursery nurses, caring studies students and secretaries, I also took the opportunity to talk to several groups of males, mainly trainee mechanics, to get their side of the story. A good deal of the material obtained at the college turned out to be some of the best I collected and could almost constitute a thesis on its own. However, I will use it for illustrative purposes in this section by referring to extracts of interviews with junior and senior secretarial groups. The former was composed entirely of school-leavers, aged sixteen, and the latter of mature students, over thirty.

To start the senior group talking I asked them what they considered to be the most important things in their lives. The first brave soul replied,

The most important thing in my life's m' daughter.  
T' me if I didn't have her I wouldn't want  
anything. Y' know, if something happened, y' know,  
I lost her, I wouldn't want t' go on. That'd be it

finished. There's nothing else that could take her place.

The next topic to arise won general agreement among the group and that was that to have a sense of humour was one of the most important things in life,

Important t' me is t' see everybody enjoying theirsels, y' know. Like in this class I think it's great because everybody does enjoy theirsels really. I don't think y' should sit 'n' work 'n' no enjoy it.

This was echoed in many similar comments,

Y've got t' be able t' laugh at things, y' know, as well as ... well, I know things are a lot serious but I mean if y' can't laugh things off it's a pretty sad state.

I then changed the emphasis slightly by asking, "What are some of the things y' want t' do with y' life?", whereupon someone shouted out, "Marry a rich man!" This opened the flood-gates for a full-scale discussion on love and marriage. Someone else in the group quickly responded to the above by saying that they wouldn't marry for love but for sex,

I believed in love at the beginning. I've been disillusioned. Y' values change. The things that were important at the beginning, erm, they change. Y' learn as y'get older.

When this was teased out it essentially meant that the feeling

was that in younger years romance was the be all and end all, loving 'your' man was enough, but it turned out later that perhaps it wasn't after all,

It used t' just be y' could go out int' the garden 'n' y' could paint the living room or something like that 'n' then it was boring. I found m'sel' that I was boring . . . y' know f' so many years y' look after y' family 'n' bring them up 'n' ...er, y' know ... they're up 'n' they don't need y' as much as what they did when they were younger so therefore y've got t' make a part of y' life just f' you.

It was feelings like these, of course, which had prompted the women in question to make the break and attend college. They all felt much more confident for having done so.

When y' were younger y' thought being married was very important but now the feeling is that y' want t' feel yourself . . . it makes y' feel a person in y' own right as opposed t' being just his wife or somebody's mother . . . it makes y' feel more like an individual.

The overall feeling in the group to emerge about marriage in this retrospective discussion was that they had been under a lot of pressure as young adults to get married,

It was expected of y'. Even when y' got married it was expected of y' t' have a kid.

--

Early on in age if y're a wee girl y' get sort o' trained int' being a wife 'n' mother cos y're given dolls 'n' prams 'n' y're a nurse 'n' y're no really interested in helicopters or that. From a very early age y're trained int' becoming a wife 'n'



mother 'n' y' just follow that road.

--

I think then as well if y'd been going out wi' a chap f' a while 'n' y' didna have an engagement ring on y' finger or y' werena gettin' married, everyone was wondering what was wrong. Folks were saying, "What a shame".

--

I'd fallen out wi' Tommy and I said t' m' pal, "Come on we'll go up the dancing tonight", 'n' she says, "O.K. but what y're gonna do about Tommy?" And I says, "Ach, don't worry, I'll get somebody else". She says, "But y're no gettin' any younger". She did! I was sixteen!

Ironically, despite the above attitudes to marriage, all the women, except one, were still married to the men they'd married relatively early in life and most said that they got on better with their husbands now than they had earlier in life. However, because this was a pilot interview I did prompt more than I normally would have by asking, "Y' said when y' were younger y' thought of marriage as being in love and romantic. What d' y' think of it now? What are y' expectations of marriage now?"

I think respect 'n' trust must come as high if not higher than love.

--

I think marriage starts off like a hot burning fire 'n' it sort o' smoulders as the years go on but something else takes the place of the love and the passion. Y' get to a different level as y' mature 'n' y' feelings mature.

Then, before I had chance, someone asked the billion dollar question,

The whole thing is, what is love?

which was immediately responded to in the most brilliant way it left everybody speechless and feeling that there wasn't much else left to say,

Love is the feeling y' feel when y' feel the feeling y've never felt before.

We then went on to discuss further the specifics of relationships between men and women before, interestingly, the women moved quickly on to discuss the difference in friendship patterns between friends of the same sex.

I find generally men don't form relationships with the same sex the same way as women do. Women I've found, if they make a friend she's a friend for as long as they can be in contact wi' one another. Even supposing they move they maybe phone or go through and visit but where a man's concerned if the bloke he's friendly wi' moves away that's it. They don't tend to keep in contact wi' one another.

--

I have a girlfriend that I met when I started work when I was sixteen 'n' now I'm over thirty 'n' I used t' see her all the time but then when I got married ... erm ... it could be a full year goes by 'n' she'll just come t' the door one night. But when we see each other it's as if I'd seen her last week. We can sit 'n' talk till one, two in the morning, without any strain or anything like that.

The other important topic to be brought up was that of parental attitudes, particularly at the time when these women

were teenagers,

My father was really, well he still is, Victorian. I've got five brothers, I'm the only girl 'n' I always had t' be in at a certain time at night 'n' we'd come up the road 'n' we'd be standing at the side o' the hoose, ha'ing a wee cuddle 'n' he'd be banging on the wall t' get in 'n' rattling the milk bottles.

--

No, m' dad used t' come t' the bus stop t' wait till y' got off the bus so y' couldna come home in a car or taxi.

--

I had t' be in m' own house at night. I can't remember them being particularly strict but they always knew what y' were doing. I always had a time t' come in 'n' mum'd wait up t' make sure I did.

--

M' dad didn't like m' husband who was m' boyfriend then 'n' he used t' come 'n' sit in the room with us with the paper up over his face, like this. We'd be sittin' 'n' he'd have the paper up 'n' if Spenny sort o' went like that, t' put his arm around me, SLAM the paper was down. I don't know how he managed it but he had the two o' us on edge. 'N' if he was in the other room he'd shuffle 'n' cough in the hallway as he came through t' the toilet 'n' then the double cough on the way back. Then he'd go t' his bed 'n' y'd go, "Aw, great!" The next thing he'd be standin' there. He was dreadful f' that. He used t' creep, creep about.

All were surprised at the change in attitudes of their parents since this time when they'd been teenagers, with regard to things like contraception and living together - things which had been regarded with shock and horror a matter of ten years previously and were now not only accepted but actively encouraged

in some cases,

I've been quite surprised at the amount of the older generation, I mean by that our mums and dads, that not only accept people living together but even think it's a good idea. Really surprised.

Even so, such matters can still be very confusing for younger generations it seems,

My wee one thinks everyone gets married twice. No, she does, cos she said t' me, "When are y' gettin' your second marriage?"

--

My wee girl knew that m' brother and his girlfriend had lived together f' nine years before they got married 'n' she came home a few months ago 'n' said, "When are you 'n' dad gettin' married?" 'N' I said, "Oh, we've been married a while", 'n' then she said, "Oh, I'd better tell Miss Mason then cos I was tellin' her y' were just living together". 'N' seemingly this teacher had said, "It doesn't matter, pet, as long as y' mummy and daddy love each other".

This brings me on to the junior contingent of secretaries who I suppose surprised me by being so traditional, conventional and non-permissive in their beliefs and ideas. I explained to them the nature of my visit and then asked the following for starters,

What kind of thing d' y' think I should concentrate on when I'm talking to young girls cos you know more about it than I do? So, has anybody got any ideas? If y' just want t' tell me what y're interested in, y' know, what y' main interests are.



This was followed, as it appears in my notes, by 'a BIG LAUGH' and a unanimous declaration, "Boys!". After some deliberation discos, clothes and make-up were added to this overwhelming passion. Most of the girls had had boyfriends from the age of twelve, when they started the High School, and the most desired attribute of the opposite sex was not their looks but their personality (which, incidentally, was a view echoed by the teenage boys I talked to). All the girls wanted to get married except for one who only saw this as desirable if she was going to have children otherwise she didn't really see the point. Among those hoping to get married eventually there was a consensus that mid-twenties was the 'right time', not because they wanted to pursue a career but because they 'wanted to go out and enjoy themselves', as they put it. They weren't keen on work after marriage nor on husband's, whom they considered already had a hard life, helping with the house or the children. When someone brought up the alternative to marriage as 'living in sin' more than one person made remarks along the lines of the following, "That's the kind o' thing y' only read about in the papers". And even those who didn't take such an unliberated view pointed out that if their mothers were against such an arrangement they wouldn't do it because they 'couldna live wi' that'. In what seemed to be a contradiction to what had just been said about 'having a good time' or 'having a fling' most girls said that they would like to be engaged while still a teenager although one girl pointed out that this might well be undesirable because of the fact that "when a guy gets a lassie an engagement ring, he

thinks he's got 'privileges'", 'privileges' which she saw as invariably leading to an unwanted pregnancy. Another surprising remark which seemed to be generally held was that it's still terrible to consider bringing up a child alone. In this group of young people single-parent families were not on, at least in principle.

As with the other group the girls soon began talking about the topics mentioned in the context of their family life and once again picked up particularly on parental attitudes and discipline.

Well, m' mum told me that when she was sixteen she told her parents, "Look, I'm sixteen, I'll do what I want" but if I said that t' my parents they'd say, "Get out the house then. They're the rules of the house 'n' if y' don't like it get out".

--

They didna get as much freedom in their day as we do.

--

Still they shouldn't put all their bad times ont' us. See my gran, she's awful, awful strict; she's no what grannies are meant t' be. She's warm-hearted but she really is strict but m' ma's stricter than her! M' gran's still strict wi' m' mam yet but, ken, m' mam's stricter than m'gran is because when m' mam 'n' dad go t' London I say t' m' gran, "Can I go out till this time?" "Ay, as long as somebody walks y' home".

--

My ma's awful strict, she's more oldfashioned than what m' gran is. D' y' no think it should be the other way round? Cos m' gran doesna bother about the boys I go out wi' 'n' that. But see m' mam, "Where are y' going?" 'n' all this.

Out of a group of about twentyfive only one girl's mother had told her about sex and the facts of life and that was because the girl had specifically asked her. The others said that although they were close to their parents, especially their mothers, nothing 'like that' was ever mentioned and one girl still wasn't allowed to watch 'Carry On' films. Knowledge about sexual matters was usually gleaned from friends, magazines or biology lessons at school.

This exercise at Bathgate assured me that at least I was beginning to think along the right lines when considering what things were important to women in their lives, and it was instructive in that it indicated it was important to find out what females of different ages thought and did was important. Most important of all, the experience gave me a great deal of confidence which I'd certainly not had before. It was exciting, interesting and thoroughly enjoyable, giving me all the impetus I needed to get stuck into the fieldwork proper. I had not only found myself handling large classes of both males and females in a manner which we all enjoyed but I also found it relatively easy to communicate at another level and that was with the staff of the College. I no longer looked with fear and trepidation at organising and carrying out my fieldwork in Falkirk.

"Better meddle wi' the de'il than the bairns o' Falkirk (Town motto)

I actually started going to Falkirk at the beginning of 1980 (my original fieldwork had started in July 1978), only a matter of six months before my grant was due to finish. However, the possible stupidity of such an exercise does not appear to have been apparent to anyone, let alone me, probably because I was filled with such enthusiasm for the project in hand.

Initially I tried to 'get a feel for the town' which wasn't too difficult mainly because it reminded me so much of my home town, owing to its scale and population makeup. I walked and cycled around, chatted to people - shop assistants, waitresses, bus drivers, British rail staff, librarians, that sort of thing. I also spent a great deal of time in the Reading Room of Falkirk Public Library, reading up on what written history there was about the place and looking through back issues of the local rag, 'The Falkirk Herald', in order to discover what the district had to offer in all sorts of ways. And I also went about the practical business of gathering maps and finding out where the best, or rather cheapest, eating places were located.

Since the 'sample' I wanted had no requirement to be representative in any strict sense of the word my supervisors and I decided that using a 'snowball' technique would be as good as any. As a first step in this procedure I split Falkirk into different geographical areas - Camelon, Bog Road, Bainsford,



Callander Park Flats, Mungahthead Road, and Grahamston and then chose various streets within each one so that I could pick names on that street from the electoral roll which after contact would be the ones who started the snowball. At the same time as all this was going on I'd noticed while browsing through the yellowing stacks of Heralds that every so often a photograph of families containing four, or even five, surviving generations of females turned up in the paper upon the birth of the last girl in the line. This was to be a significant factor for the rest of my research but at the particular time of discovery I only used these families in the paper as other names for the first layer of the 'snowball'.

The next task was to decide how best to approach these potential respondents and I chose to write them a letter telling them briefly what I was doing and warning them that I'd contact them in the near future. The first few letters sent out read as follows:

Dear Mrs Somebody,

I hope you don't mind me writing to you but you see, I'm doing a research project at the University of Edinburgh and feel that you may be able to help me. The purpose of my work is to find out what women of today do and think (for example, whether they work or not, their attitudes to love and marriage, etc.) and I have chosen Falkirk as a place where I might talk to women about their lives. So, would you be willing to chat to me for a couple of hours sometime, please? I will call round next week to ask you what you think of the idea. I look forward to meeting you then although I do realise that you may not be in when I call and also appreciate that you may well be too busy to spend time talking to me.

Yours sincerely,

Subsequently, however, after the first batch of interviews I changed the wording slightly because the phrase 'love and marriage' seemed to have been taken to mean that I wanted to find out details which were considered too personal and private to divulge. I got the feeling that this had worried people despite the fact that no-one ever said so outright. No interviews were lost because of this oversight but they might have been in the future. I still intended eliciting exactly the same information from respondents but learnt quickly that I should be more subtle in my initial approach to them. The second letter was written to sound more general and perhaps less threatening than the first and this was the format which was used throughout to contact multi-generational families:

Dear Mrs. Blank,

I hope you don't mind me writing to you but you see I'm doing a research project towards my degree at Edinburgh University and wondered if you, your daughter, and your mother would be kind enough to help me. My interests lie in finding out details of how women of different generations have experienced growingup and womanhood during the twentieth century, and I have chosen Falkirk as a place where I might talk to women about their lives. I suppose basically I'm wanting to hear people's life stories - what their childhood was like, their schooldays, their teenage years, details of becoming a worker, a wife, a mother, and a grandmother all the different phases of life.

I came across your family during the first stages of my research while I was looking through books and newspapers about the locality in Falkirk Public Library. I soon noticed that 'The Falkirk Herald' often had featured in it photos of families containing four or even five generations of females. I decided that it would be ideal for me, and very interesting, if I could

gain the cooperation of such rare families in my work. So, would you be willing to chat to me sometime please? I'll call round during the next two weeks to ask you what you think of the idea. I look forward to meeting you then although I do realise that you may not be in when I call and also appreciate that you may be too busy to spend time talking to me.

Yours sincerely,

A few problems cropped up at the beginning of the fieldwork but they weren't serious although some of them were to crop up time and again. The first problem I encountered was, in fact, something that was never repeated during the next year and a half or so and that was that my very first respondent, a twenty-three year old radiographer, declined to be recorded. However, the interview was a good one and the notes I was able to take were sufficient so that this incident was not as off-putting as it might have been. At any rate the main achievement of this interview lay not so much in its form or content but in the fact that I'd actually got to the stage of knocking on a stranger's door and asking to be allowed into their home and their life. It was a major hurdle to get over although I must confess to being nervous every time I went to see a new respondent. However, after this first interview I always knew that I could do it no matter how nervous I seemed. I was immediately relieved that I'd sent an introductory letter because in that way any awkward preliminaries, like explaining why I had landed on the doorstep, had already been dealt with and all I had to do was introduce myself.

The main thing to become abundantly clear from a very early



stage in the empirical work was just how time-consuming interviewing could be. That is to say, not how long an interview lasted from when I asked the first question to when I asked the last, from when I switched on the tape recorder till I switched it off, but how much time things related to but outside the actual interview took up. It would seem, when thinking about it in the abstract, eminently possible to fit quite a few interviews into a day even if they did last a couple of hours each, and certainly possible to fit quite a few into a whole week's work but this wasn't usually the case. And I never felt I was dashing on at a good or desirable rate. However, I had to accept that if I wanted my raw material to be real people living real lives it was a fact of life which I had to get used to and live with, without becoming too down-hearted if things through no fault of my own often moved along at a snail's pace.

A lot of the time-consuming nature of the work was caused by the gregariousness and politeness characteristic of working-class life. Usually when I arrived to do an interview I had to first of all have a cup of tea and biscuits and a general (untaped) natter before getting down to the main business in hand. Then invariably at the end of the interview it was either lunch time or tea time and I'd be invited to join the family in their meal. Besides these standard routines which I became enmeshed in I had to contend, in the course of the interview, with demands from children or babies or pets or all three for various attentions together with interruptions from other family members or friends

or the fish man or the window cleaner, whatever.

Even setting up the interviews was often less than straightforward. As an example I will describe what happened to the second interview I planned. This one was based on one of the multi-generational families that appeared in The Falkirk Herald - Kathy Bayne, 38; Kathy's mother, Isa MacDougall, 69; and Kathy's daughter, Gillian Foster, 18. In the multi-generational families I usually interviewed the 'middle' person first since she was the link between the older and younger generations and could probably tell me things about both which would be useful for those interviews. I sent Kathy Bayne a standard letter on 5th March 1980 and actually called round to see her on the evening of 13th March 1980, after having completed another interview that afternoon. I spent about an hour with Kathy, just chatting, and arranged to carry out a 'proper' interview, over lunch, on 19th March. However, I arrived promptly at 1 p.m. on the 19th only to find a note from her on the door, saying that the arrangements were off owing to a family crisis, and asking me to phone her. On arriving back in Edinburgh I discovered that Kathy had actually written to me at the University explaining that her mother had been rushed into hospital. Giving the family time to get over this crisis, I phoned Kathy a week later on 25th March and spoke to Mr Bayne who suggested I phone Kathy at work which I did, arranging to see her on the afternoon of 8th April. However, this time I had to phone on 7th April to cancel the interview once more because my mother was ill and I had to go home to England for a while. On my return a week later I phoned



again and arranged to see Kathy on 23rd April, more than a month after the original arrangement. We did manage to meet up eventually! However, Kathy's mother remained too ill to interview and although I did speak to her daughter, Gillian, several times on an informal basis when it came to the point of interviewing her 'properly' my efforts were unsuccessful. Kathy had arranged to meet me to take me up to Gillian's flat, despite the fact that I'd insisted it wasn't necessary, but she couldn't make it in the end because of her mother's illness once more. The result was that when I did eventually get to Gillian's place, which was a bus ride away from the town centre, the baby was being fed, her sister-in-law called and stayed for ages, and then her husband, Tony, who was not entirely in favour of me prying into his family's life and business, arrived home from work. The situation was rescued slightly because Tony did invite me to stay for a meal despite the fact that he wasn't keen on having his wife's views recorded permanently on tape. However, over the meal it was awkward to talk to Gillian about all the things I wanted to, with Tony there listening and interrupting. The trouble in these situations of constant distraction which meant that the interview was less than satisfactory was that having spent a day or half a day in someone's house and life it was then incredibly difficult to carry on plaguing them until a more ideal time for my own purposes arose. I didn't always feel that I could bother people to the extent which was sometimes necessary.

During these first trying weeks I did decide certain

positive things. The main one was that I was going to try to make up my 'sample' of respondents from the multi-generational families which had appeared in 'The Falkirk Herald' over the years so that it would have some kind of consistency to it, and the other thing was that I would get people to tell me their life story beginning wherever they wanted to but trying to cover all aspects of it which had appeared in the outline without too much prompting. I dropped the idea of bringing the conversation round to love and romance deciding that it was better to let them talk and tell me what they considered to be important in their lives which might well be something completely at odds with what I'd originally thought would be all-important. I believed, at this stage, that what people talked about would be the things in their lives which were or had been most important to them.

The main difficulty with the multi-generational family approach was the one described above in relation to Isa MacDougall, that is, illness or even death of the oldest family member who'd appeared in the original newspaper photograph some months or years before my contact with the family. Obviously, the further back in time that I went with the newspaper search the more likely I was to encounter such problems. This led me to realise that it would be impossible to talk to 'enough' people using this method so I decided I would have to look elsewhere for more representatives of the various generations that had grown up this century. I also needed to talk to girls younger than the ones being tapped by this method, that is, teenagers who were still at school.

It was at this stage that I decided to treat the female population of Falkirk as belonging to ten year age groups, 0-10, 10-20 . . . 80-90, 90-100, and to try to interview at least half a dozen girls or women from each of these groups. This decision meant that I eventually interviewed ninety-three subjects.

The search for a more diverse sample led me to youth clubs, Old Folks' centres, W.E.A. classes and Women's Aid, and maybe I should say a little about each of these avenues in turn. As an overall view I think it is worth pointing out that finding respondents in this way was just as time-consuming as approaching families in terms of the groups' related activities which I found myself having and wanting to be involved in. These ranged from old folks' sing-songs to W.E.A. lectures, from Women's Aid children's Christmas party to youth club cookery classes and discos.

In order to talk to teenage girls around the age of fourteen or fifteen I first of all wrote to the head teachers of Camelon and Bainsford Secondary schools but I was not allowed immediate access, being told I had to go through the Education Committee. Even with the Committee's permission ultimate access depended on individual head teachers, one of whom immediately registered her total disapproval. However, I avoided using up more precious time and having more unnecessary hassle by tapping the same

population at the youth clubs of the two areas, the one in Camelon actually being held in the evening in the school of the disapproving headmistress.

I didn't simply turn up to these places but went through the Youth Officer on the Council and further via the youth leaders and organisers at the individual clubs. I think perhaps this contact with the youth clubs was my favourite bit of the research although it did turn out to be the one fraught with most difficulties, mainly because at the Bainsford Youth Club I was always finding myself in between the 'grown-ups' and, as they called the girls, the 'children'. My status was indeterminate and I suffered because of this. For example, I was really only at the club as an observer and despite the fact that I was an adult it wasn't really my place to discipline the girls even if I'd had a clue about club rules. However, this was not the way the Committee members saw things and I was hauled over the coals for letting the kids smoke or swear or both. These adults were also particularly against members sitting around discussing things, "just talking", despite the fact that at this venue there was little else for this age group to do. The ironic thing about the whole affair was that I carried on going to the club much longer than I needed to for research purposes because I enjoyed seeing the girls and they enjoyed seeing me. A visit to the Club was a good way to round off a day's fieldwork and I felt I owed the girls something for all their time and trouble. After various altercations with the Committee and despite desperate pleas from the girls to stay I decided that it was time to leave



whereupon the girls gave me 'treasured' items of their jewellery, necklaces and badges, as farewell presents. All very touching and sad.

I had no such problems at Camelon Youth Club, mainly I think because their Committee was made up of older members of the Club rather than outside adults. The actual spread of members' ages here also made life easier because the minimum age was about thirteen, whereas in Bainsford children as young as seven had been present and tended to be a very disruptive element. At Camelon I was given the use of a staff room which enabled me to speak to girls individually, something which just hadn't been possible in Bainsford.

As for the Old Folks' Club, the W.E.A. afternoon classes and Women's Aid I literally turned up on their doorsteps and introduced myself to the main organisers, who in turn let me introduce myself to the participants involved. At the Old Folks Club and the W.E.A. classes I simply made my presence clear to all and then mingled among the people there for several weeks allowing them to get to know me and trust me, and then asked women individually if I might talk to them some time. Many, many people were willing to take part and it was only unfortunate that I simply could not get round everyone who wanted to tell their story. The Women's Aid channel was slightly different, perhaps more delicate, because while some of my respondents from here were obtained by approaching women who arrived at the office



others were suggested to me by the organisers who, after checking with the women in question, gave out their addresses.

Altogether the fieldwork took about eighteen months to complete: a long time. Looking back I am now quite convinced that I tried to do far too much in terms of numbers and feel I could have written an adequate, even good, thesis purely by using the information and experience gained from the original multi-generational families. However, this was never apparent to me in the preparatory or fieldwork stages and only became clear, as did many things, when I actually started writing-up. My other mistakes during the fieldwork stage were not keeping a detailed enough diary and not keeping abreast of the interview material. The latter mistake had dire consequences. Both these lapses can be put down to tiredness or laziness, but mostly to the former. Once a day in Falkirk was over I did at times write up quite a detailed description of it in my diary while travelling back to Edinburgh on the train but usually I felt so shattered that I only noted the barest details. The consequences of this might not have been as serious as I feel they were if I hadn't made the second fatal mistake for oral historians. What I should have done was transcribe the material as I went along, at least partially, or even write a *précis* of each interview/person/family. However, what in fact happened was that I went full-steam ahead with the interviewing and taping without this back-up system, with the result that after eighteen months I had literally a mountain of taped material which I just could not face. My horror was partly to do with the quantity of stuff and

partly psychological in the sense that I couldn't bear to listen to the interviews because I didn't want to hear how badly I sounded or realise how badly I'd done the work. Essentially, I was frightened not of what was on the tapes but what wasn't on them. And for these reasons the tapes lay gathering dust for about two years before I forced myself to listen to them let alone make sense of them! Of course, once I did listen I was pleasantly surprised at how good they actually were. It was a strange business listening to myself interviewing years later because I sat there with baited breath hoping I had asked the next question which was crying out to be asked. Usually I had. I fully transcribed about a third of the material and became conversant with most of the rest and then was somewhat put off again - this time by the typed mountain rather than the taped mountain. The material began to look even more unmanageable by the minute as word piled upon word and page upon page.

I wish I could describe the process of how I did come to make some kind of sense of it all but I'm afraid I can't. Sheer panic and an ultimate deadline had a lot to do with it, as did financial assistance from my brother which meant that for the first time I could concentrate fully on my work as opposed to concentrating rather more heavily on financing myself by working at odd jobs, usually more than one at a time, which were tiring and time-consuming.

## **The final result**

The thesis was written up as a sequence of apparently somewhat unintegrated sections to exemplify by this very structure what I personally take to be the problems inherent in any sociological enterprise but which arise especially when dealing with very detailed personalised accounts, as in oral history type studies. If we are to be honest practitioners of our craft we have to display the difficulties we have in taking the day-to-day lives of human beings as our topic of analysis, at least at times when we have the chance to discuss such matters in print as opposed to being continually aware of them in our own heads.

There is no neat fit between the theory and practice of social life, even though one is supposedly an explanation of the other, however much we desire it and however much better our work can read if we conveniently ignore this fact.

Thus, I wanted to take the opportunity to shed some light on these facts in an arena and before an audience where this seemed to be possible. Because such an undertaking is not normally permitted or appropriate in standard papers or books but since such a statement about sociology is important I felt it could be made in the context of a thesis which, after all, should contain elements of what its writer has learnt whilst testing out his or her sociological competence.

The move between theory and empirical material is not smooth in the reading of this work but neither is it in any sociology

which we do that contains an empirical content. I went into the field with as few preconceived ideas as possible about the details and patterns of social life which I might find out about from my respondents. It was only after hours of listening to the resulting tapes and even more hours of thinking about the material on them that any sort of significant coherence among them became evident. The theoretical ideas grew out of the empirical material rather than the other way round so that although in my written work some of the theory appears prior to the ethnography this is not a representation of the chronology of the creative discourse involved but merely the necessity, because of the particular task in hand, to stick to conventions of academic presentation.

When treating the women's testimonies I was also at pains to preserve what they believed was most important to them in their own lives for to exclude this aspect of the stories told to me in the context of an on-going personal relationship would have been little short of condescending. Sometimes this involved going into excruciating details, for example, of a girl's pattern of courtship but this represented the topic she talked most about and what for her had been the most important time of her life so far. So not only did I try to take hold of this dense material and go beyond it, at some stages of the work, to show what I felt to be the most important aspects of this sort of life I also wanted, in other parts, to be 'true' to my respondents, their lives, and their stories. There could be no neat fit between these two aims since one contradicts the other to a large extent.



## CHAPTER TWO

### TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

#### Introduction

My interest in a temporal framework arose mainly from extensive and careful listening to my tapes but also from my own memories of moving in an ordered, rhythmic world while growing-up as a girl in a working-class family. From an early age, I knew that each day of the week was different because of what chores were done on it and what food was eaten on it. If ever I felt like having a day off school I made sure not to 'take ill' on Monday. Monday, the worst day of the week - washday - when the whole house was damp and limp; when it invariably rained; and when a big clothes-horse full of washing prevented anyone even seeing the fire let alone feeling the warmth from it. But wait, I tell a lie, there was a day even worse than Monday and that was Sunday. Sunday, when I wasn't allowed to wear my beloved jeans and T-shirt but rather a dress and white socks and white sandals. It wasn't as if we went to church for goodness sake! The street was out of bounds on Sundays too. It was a day for being quiet, peaceful, clean, and for visiting my grandparents with my dad, even if I didn't want to go. To be honest, I wasn't impressed at



sitting stiffly in my best clothes listening to the week's gossip. Indeed, the only thing that made the outing vaguely bearable was the thought that I might be given one of gran's Yorkshire puds covered with onion gravy, on a china tea-plate. Still, it had to be done; it was a duty. That's what Sundays were for. They weren't meant to be enjoyed. And yet, there were other days, like Saturdays. Saturday - no school, only wonderful ballroom dancing class, followed usually by mum's yet more wonderful corned beef, potatoes and onions, roasted to perfection. Then in the afternoon I'd go bargain-hunting on the market with mum, and Uncle Fred would come round for tea, and we'd all go across the road to Aunty Edie's to watch 'Cheyenne' on her telly cos we didn't have one.

Having grown-up in this context the material on the tapes was fascinating because of the striking 'rituals of regularity and routine' of women's lives that came across in the interviews. Such patterns were not only connected with housework but were also very evident in social relations, particularly in the area of family relationships. After this simple initial observation, all sorts of other aspects regarding time as it was related to the lives of these women began to become apparent, making me wonder why I had never been fully aware of this temporal dimension before. Two things in particular struck me at this juncture. One was how all along, by the very construction of the research, some intuitive notion of the importance of time in the lives of working-class women and their culture had been at the heart of my work on all these different generations or age groups

within the family and the community, without being properly explicated. The second was how, judging from what women of different ages had said about their childhood, youth, married lives, time, in some senses of the word, itself changes through time.

I want to focus on the ways in which time presents itself to working-class women and how it is then culturally moulded to fit, or indeed make possible, an entire symbolic universe encapsulating practical day-to-day living and morality. I want to discover how relationships, beliefs and social processes can be highlighted by studying how women experience, use and manipulate this all-important dimension. A distinct female life space appears to exist within working-class culture which is not only a separate but a 'sacred' place where women acquire considerable influence by maintaining control over their own and other's being and destiny. This acquisition of some kind of power results from a strict ordering of the environment whereby life is lived and experienced in terms of separate manageable chunks. Eventually I want to look at the elements used to strengthen and maintain this ordering, and the elements that continually threaten it.

A temporal framework is relevant to analyses of the individual, of groups and interaction, of processes of social change, as it is also to exploring the past, present and future of individuals, families and communities, the histories and hopes

of which are in a sense separate yet inextricably intertwined. Because it does allow this, using a temporal framework of analysis is perhaps the method par excellence of capturing in one's work what C. Wright Mills saw as being the essence of sociology,

The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals ... The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise. (C. Wright Mills:1970:1011)

### The mystery of time

Lauer says it becomes evident that 'time is the greatest of all mysteries' as soon as we begin to think about it, 'for our experience with time continually leads us into puzzles and paradoxes' because the individual's experience of it is 'both intimate and impersonal' (Lauer 1981: 1).

Though awareness and conceptions of time are products of the human mind, time itself seems to possess an existence apart, its passage impersonal and inexorable. As an old Italian proverb put it, "Man measures time and time measures man". This intimate and personal, yet aloof and detached character constitutes the paradox of human time. (Wessen and Gorman quoted in Lauer 1981: 1)

Thrift, in his paper about time in relation to human geography, makes the point that 'time' is one of those concepts which everyone thinks they can adequately define and explain

until they are asked to do so. Perhaps this happens more with time than any other concept because we all continually live in and by time, be it of the social or clock variety, or both. Addressing the same topic, Weigert writes,

It would seem that the easiest question to answer in everyday life is, "What time is it?" Within the taken-for-granted reality and socially constructed structures of our lives, the answer is simply given in terms of times of the day measured in the same way by clocks, watches, or other timepieces. (Weigert 1981: 196)

The puzzle of time goes back at least to the Greeks and Aristotle who posed the question, "In what sense, if any, can time be said to exist?"

Time has intrigued philosophers at least since persons of a speculative disposition left any records, and conceptions of time are distinctly variable from one culture to another. Yet the temporal ordering of social behaviour has received only sporadic or intermittent attention by the sciences dealing with man ... The focus on time as a central feature of order and sequence ... is so minimally developed that no-one has even invented a name for a science of the temporal dimensions of social life ... inventing some designation like "anthropochronology" seems scarcely necessary and, indeed, more than slightly pretentious. (Moore 1963: 5)

It was not until this century that any great impetus was given to the meaning of time and duration in psychology, philosophy, literature and history by revolutionary changes in theoretical physics whereupon time was declared to be dependent upon physical processes. To put it another way, time lost its



absolute character and could no longer be properly understood using the Newtonian definition as that which "of itself, and from its own nature flows equably with<sup>out</sup> regard to anything external". (quoted in Lauer 1981: 3)

In relativistic physics, various observers cut out their space and their time in different fashions. The world no longer contained a time that was independent of human processes, and in particular of human consciousness. (Lauer 1981: 3)

Following largely from this,

... thinkers in various fields began to explore the meaning of temporality. It became increasingly clear that any viable theory must deal with temporality, whether the level of analysis is physical, ~~the~~ infrahuman or <sup>the</sup> human. Philosophers, historians, psychiatrists, musicians, linguists, analysts of drama and literature, and others all found <sup>that</sup> there were significant temporal dimensions to their fields of study. (Lauer 1981: 3)

In sociology and anthropology some appreciation of the significance of time has been evident from an early point. For example, we find it in the work of Durkheim at the turn of the century (Durkheim 1912), and in the work of Sorokin and Merton during the thirties and forties (Sorokin and Merton 1937, Sorokin 1943) where they sketched some of the ways in which we might study and comprehend temporal matters. In some of the classic writings of British social anthropology, such as Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), we find not only descriptions of time-reckoning which appear to be very

different from our own but also perceptive commentary on the general relationships between temporal structures and social structures. More recently we find in history, anthropology and sociology a small number of valiant efforts to advance our understanding of time and hortatory remarks about the need to develop these (de Grazia 1962, Moore 1963, Gurvitch 1964, Thompson 1967, 1968, Leach 1971, Abrams 1972, 1982, Geertz 1973, Bertaux 1981).

But for all the pious words the fact remains that in sociology and history, two disciplines in which plainly time matters we discover few instances where any adequate sustained analysis of it is made. To be sure lip-service is paid to the idea that time provides an elemental framework for human affairs but as Lauer observes, "actual research fails to incorporate the temporal dimension". Time because it is ever present tends to be taken-for-granted (Zerubavel 1981). It ought not to be.

### **Social Time**

What emerges from most of the thoughtful discussions of the phenomenon of time is that there are different types of time which must be distinguished. The aim of all sociological discussions on the matter is to differentiate between 'physical or astronomical time' and 'social time'. Obviously it is the latter that ought to be the focus of historical and sociological curiosity.

... while the physical and biological approaches have tended to emphasise the objective qualities of time, the sociological approach would be more likely to highlight its subjective qualities, the meanings that people attach to it ... to emphasise the way time is perceived and handled by collectivities. (Zerubavel 1981: 2)

Similarly Weigert points out,

The fundamental distinction for an analysis of time in everyday life is between physical and social time. Think for a moment of the variety of physical times you know, that is, time which refers to sequences and durations of events which are independent of human constructions. For example, there are sequences of darkness and light ... successions of the seasons, the ebb and flow of tides ... and the birth and death of animals and people. If this short list makes physical time appear complicated, now think of the variety of social times, that is, sequences and durations which are humanly constructed. There are hours of the day, days of the week, stages in a career ... years in school, and time left before graduation, promotion, retirement ... Social time can refer to the smallest periods in our everyday lives or the largest eras in the history of human existence. (Weigert 1981: 197)

Sorokin and Merton noted that physically based time-reckoning passes relentlessly in relatively homogeneous units, while social time unfolds with varying rhythms - sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly and sometimes with breaks, like sleep or holidays. They quote James, who pointed out,

In general, a time filled with varied and interesting experiences seems short in passing, but long as we look back. On the other hand, a tract of time empty of experiences seems long in passing but in retrospect short. (Sorokin and Merton 1937: 617)

Social time is uneven and it would seem to be worth quoting Sorokin and Merton at some length on this matter.

Astronomical time is uniform, homogeneous; it is purely quantitative, shorn of qualitative variations. Can we so characterise social time? Obviously not - there are holidays, days devoted to particular civil functions, "lucky" days and "unlucky" days, market days, etc. Periods of time acquire specific qualities by virtue of association with the activities peculiar to them. (Sorokin and Merton 1937: 621)

Different kinds of qualities are given to definite units of time. For example, the Mohammedans take Friday as their holy day whereas the Jews take Saturday and the Christians Sunday. This shows that a purely quantitative measure of time cannot account for the qualities with which various time units are endowed by members of a group.

Quantitative approaches ignore the fact that "the human mind does tend to attach an unusual value to any day in the calender that is in any way outstanding". From this it does not necessarily follow that social time has no quantitative aspects, but it does appear that it is not pure quantity, homogeneous in all its parts, always commensurable to itself and exactly measurable ... differences in quality lead to the dependence of relative values of time durations not only on their absolute length but also on the nature and intensity of their qualities. Quantitatively equal periods of time are rendered socially unequal and unequal periods are socially equalised. (Sorokin and Merton 1937: 622)

Geertz (1973) found that the Balinese have, what he calls, a 'detemporalising' conception of time. Their social time includes



a calendar with a complex system of periodicity. It contains ten different cycles of day names, ranging in length from ten days to one day. Geertz describes this as a 'permutational' calendar since every day is the conjunction of the ten cycles but only the five -, six-, and seven-day cycles are of real importance. To decide whether a day is significant for practical or religious purposes the Balinese identify it in terms of the cycles and in this way are able to identify holidays and religious celebrations, and also guide their daily activities. According to Geertz,

There are good and bad days on which to build a house, launch a business enterprise, change residence, go on a trip, harvest crops, sharpen cock spurs, hold a puppet show, or (in the old days) start a war, or conclude a peace. (1973: 395-6)

Anthropologists, like Geertz, have done much to make us aware of the relativity of time-reckoning, and show that social time is a more inclusive concept than clock time, with the two being possibly but not necessarily related. Cassirer (1977) conceptualised social time as being qualitative and concrete not quantitative and abstract, neatly summing up the sense of its passage by saying that "its beats are not measured or counted but immediately felt". Social time is segregated, with different times for different activities. These segments says Geertz "don't tell you what time it is; they tell you what kind of time it is". Applying this to a particular social occasion, Bock has shown how an Indian wake is divided into "gathering time",



"prayer time", "singing time", "intermission", and "meal time" but points out that these "times" bear no specific relationship to clock time. The group of mourners move from one time to another as <sup>a</sup> result of consensual feeling rather than the movement of the clock. Moore, on the same lines, explains,

Time thus becomes, along with space, a way of locating human behaviour, a mode of fixing the action that is <sup>peculiarly</sup> appropriate to circumstances. (Moore 1963: 7)

Leach (1961) pointed out that the Kachin people of Northern Burma do not have a word that is the equivalent of the English word 'time'. When we would refer to 'time of the clock', the Kachin would refer to ahkying; a long time is na, a short time is tawng and a time of one's life is asak. That is to say, the Kachin do not conceptualise time in relation to some external objectivity.

However, societies which do not possess mechanical clock time are not without regularity or temporal measurement. Both natural and social phenomena can be used for the patterning and timing of life. P.E. Ariotti describes several ways in which natural events have been used for timing human activities.

The arrival of the cranes in ancient Greece, Hesiod noted, marks the time for planting, the return of the swallows the end of pruning. Even more reliable are celestial events ... The South African Bushman, who lacks all systematic knowledge of astronomy, note the rising of Sirius and Canopus and reckon the progress of winter by their movement across the <sup>night</sup> sky. (quoted in Lauer: 22)

Evans Pritchard discovered that the Nuer calendar was based upon cyclical ecological changes. In the month of kur cattle camps are organised and fishing dams are built, so when 'one is doing these things it must be kur or thereabouts'. In the month of dwat the camps are dissolved and people return to their villages - 'since people are on the move it must be dwat or thereabouts'. However, the temporal concepts of the Nuer reflect not only the ecological setting of their culture but also relationships within the social structure. They provide an example of how social activities can be used to indicate time. Evans Pritchard reckons that Nuer time is less a means of co-ordinating events than of co-ordinating relationships. Thus,

--- Nuer have another way of stating roughly when events took place: not in number of years, but by reference to the age set system. The distances between events cease to be reckoned in time concepts as we understand them, and are reckoned in terms of structural distance, being the relations of groups of people to other groups of people. (1940: 105)

In our own industrial societies there emerged, with the industrial revolution and the associated production processes and factory routines, an emphasis on one kind of time that was special - clock time (Thompson 1967). We take this for granted, assigning to this kind of time, and the work activities that it principally regulates, a pre-eminence which obscures the co-existence of alternative temporal schemes - schemes which are equally pervasive and familiar but which are rarely discussed.

Sociology, for all that it claims to be critical and to 'see through' our industrial societies, generally tends to reinforce the assumption that clock time is the most important time.

Clock time itself is not all of a piece and the degree to which it structures life in various groups differs so that even in industrial societies<sup>it</sup> may be a relatively peripheral part of social life for some people. It is also important to note that clock time actually becomes part of social time in our kind of society. Social meanings are imposed on clock time in such a way that different units of clock time will have differing meanings. Zerubavel found a simple example of this when he studied the temporal order of a hospital. Obviously when considered in a purely quantitative sense, any unit of clock time is equal to any other unit of the same duration, whether the amount of time is a second, a minute, an hour, a day. However, although each day, for example, contains twenty-four hours, different days mean different things to people. When making up work schedules hospital administrators had to very careful to be 'fair' so that all employees did their share but no more of weekend or evening working. Sorokin and Merton neatly sum up this aspect of social and clock time by saying that,

Social duration does not equal astronomical duration, since the former is a symbolic, the latter an empirical duration. (1937: 625)

Sorokin stressed that social time is different to astronomical time because the former is an expression of 'the change of movement of social phenomena in terms of other social



phenomena taken as points of reference'. However, he also pointed out that social time and astronomical time are significantly correlated in modern society, with quite precise clock time being imposed on all manner of human activity, from sleeping and eating to loving and quarrelling. Having said that, he is at pains to point out that social time is more than clock time and that, in fact, as Gurvitch recognised, it is 'not always measurable and even more not always quantifiable' (Gurvitch 1964).

### **A Typology of Social Time**

Once they have established the distinctiveness of social time most authors on the subject move on to offer a typology of the concept and thereby a means of using it in analysis, all agreeing with Lewis and Weigert that 'social time permeates every region of social life' (1982: 434). Lewis and Weigert propose, quite rightly I think, that different types of social time operate at different levels of the social structure which they see as having three broadly agreed upon levels - the individual, the group and the cultural level. The corresponding forms of social time are thus - 'self time', 'interaction time', and 'institutional time'.

Gurvitch (1964) considered eight different times to be necessary for an understanding of social life - enduring time, deceptive time, erratic time, cyclical time, retarded time, alternating time, time in advance of itself, and explosive time.

Moore believed that social time was made up of three important elements - synchronisation, sequence and rate. Synchronisation refers to the necessity for simultaneous actions in social life; sequence refers to the fact that certain actions need specific ordering; and rate refers to the observation that it is the frequency of events during a particular time period which may be the crucial factor.

Following on from the work of Gurvitch and Moore it is Lauer who in my opinion offers the clearest typology of social time which for him relates to,

The patterns and orientations that relate to social life and to the conceptualisation of the ordering of social life. (1981: 26)

His conceptual scheme for temporal analysis rests on the premise that social time has three main constituents which are as follows

- (1) **temporal patterning**, the elements of which are periodicity, tempo, timing, duration and sequence; (2) **temporal orientation**, which refers primarily to the rank ordering of past, present and future; and (3) **temporal perspective**, which refers to the positive or negative image of the past, present or future that prevails for a given society, group or individual. I feel, after my own reading of Moore, that a fourth constituent should be added to this list - (4) **temporal strategies**, which refers to the deliberate manipulation of time in order to gain or secure power.

Lauer and Moore both believe that periodicity, the first element of temporal patterning mentioned above, is one of the essential and most important ways in which we come to experience time. Periodicity refers to various rhythms of phenomena in social life that are basically cyclical in character and which recur with some kind of regularity. The regularity involved may be measured by clock time or by comparing social phenomena with other social phenomena. Thus, periodicities can be 'regular' in occurrence even though not actually regular by the clock. Uniform rates of recurrence are, of course, easy to observe in formal organisations and work places but it is possible to identify uniform rates of recurrence of activities at the microsocial level and within relatively unstructured areas such as that of informal relations.

Furthermore, these are not only empirical patterns, but actual normative prescriptions as well. The normative overtones of notions such as 'too often' or 'hardly ever' suggest that even the temporal spacing of visits, telephone calls and letters exchanged among friends - a useful indicator of what Durkheim considered to be the 'moral density' of social relations - is by no means 'casual' and is quite often governed by some regular 'proper' tempi. (Zerubavel 1981: 10)

The second element of temporal patterning, tempo, simply refers to rate which may relate either to the frequency of activities in some unit of social time or to the rate of change of some phenomena. Action that is 'toofast' or 'too slow' will upset other elements of temporal ordering, those of synchronisation and sequence, both of which will be described

below. In situations where some flexibility in temporal limits and rates is possible, knowledge and practice may be important determinants of the rate of activities per unit of time, or in the accumulation of 'discretionary time'. Moore gives the example that if a housewife thoroughly familiarises herself with the location of goods in a supermarket she may have more time to gossip while out shopping or more time for other activities.

Timing, the third element of Lauer's 'temporal patterning', is what Moore calls 'synchronisation' and involves the adjustment of various social unit, such as individuals or groups, and processes with each other. Moore writes,

Although any of the dimensions of temporal ordering may be subject to some latitude, some tolerable degree of looseness or approximation, timing is an intrinsic quality of personal and collective behaviour. If activities have no temporal order, they have no order at all. (1964: 8)

Zerubavel refers to this element as 'the standardisation of the temporal location' of numerous events and activities which he points out presupposes 'scheduling' of some kind. He notes that this is a typically Western phenomenon which involves moving away from the natural or causal sense of time.

Unlike many non-Western civilisations, where events and activities are temporally located in a relatively spontaneous manner, we tend to 'schedule' them, that is, routinely fix them at... particular hours, on particular days of the week, in particular parts of the year, or even in particular periods within one's life career... In



general, most of our daily activities are scheduled in a fairly rigid manner ... we usually eat not necessarily when we are hungry, but, rather, during officially designated eating periods such as 'lunchtime' or 'dinner time'

(1981: 7)

This element of 'timing' also includes the notion of a sensitivity to the appropriate timing activities, such as <sup>the</sup> right 'time' to ask a girl for a date, to ask your dad for a couple of quid, to get married.

Duration, the fourth element of temporal patterning, refers to the length of time an activity lasts or, more precisely, how long it is expected to last or how long it is perceived to last. As Alvin Toffler has pointed out,

In adult behaviour, virtually all we do, from mailing an envelope to making love, is premised upon certain spoken or unspoken assumptions about duration. (1971: 43)

The duration of many everyday events although quite arbitrary is often seen as being intrinsic to the activity. Zerubavel points out that most people believe that a film or a concert should last approximately two hours, even though this has never been written down anywhere, and would feel cheated if such performances lasted only ten minutes.

This notion of 'only' suggests that we have fairly well defined ideas of what the 'proper' duration of events are, and even though these are hardly ever formally and explicitly specified, they are nevertheless regarded as normatively binding. (1991: 6)

These ideas are equally applicable to the area of informal social relations where it is possible to claim that friends or relatives have left too early or have out-stayed their welcome. Closely associated with this is the way in which equal amounts of clock time may appear very different in terms of social time. One hour at grandmother's may seem like an age whereas an hour out with one's mates may just fly past. The way in which people perceive time in this way is probably a good indication of the meaning of various activities to them.

Another measure of such values may be obvious from looking at one aspect of the fifth and final element of temporal patterning, that of sequence. This refers to the ordering of activities and is reflected in such commonplaces as 'work before play' although it must be remembered that the ordering of certain sequence may be a result of necessity or habit rather than importance. Zerubavel claims that,

Rigid sequential structures are the most obvious and conspicuous form of temporal regularity. It is the nature of many events, activities, and situations that they cannot all take place simultaneously and must, therefore be temporally segregated from one another in terms of 'before' and 'after'. The sequential order in accordance with which they are arranged may sometimes be purely random. However, it is very often the case that it is rigid, to the point of irreversibility.(1981: 2-3)

Zerubavel takes his cue along this line of thinking from Berger and Luckman whose views on sequence in everyday life he goes on

to quote,

I cannot reverse at will the sequences imposed by (the temporal structure of everyday life) - 'first things first' is an essential element of my knowledge of everyday life. Thus, I cannot take a certain examination before I have passed through certain educational programs, I cannot practice my profession before I have taken this examination, and so on. (1967: 27-8)

Sequence, like the other elements of temporal patterning, is not simply empirical coincidence, it is normatively prescribed. This is evident not only at the level of events like weddings and funerals but also at that of entire life careers.

Some irreversibilities are determined by nature... it is impossible to become an infant after one has aged... or are inevitable from a logical or technical point of view - technical constraint forces us to eat only after, not before, cooking. However, it is mere artificial convention that underlies our custom of serving soup before, rather than after, serving meat. (1981: 3)

Zerubavel uses Ray Birdwhistell's investigations to highlight our thinking about sequence by taking the example of courtship behaviour which includes generally agreed upon stages which ought to precede or follow others - 'necking', 'petting', and actual sexual intercourse and the first date, 'going steady', engagement, marriage.

The boy or girl is called 'slow' or 'fast' in terms of the appropriate ordering of the steps, not in terms of the length of time taken at each stage. Skipping steps or reversing their order is 'fast'. Insistence on ignoring the prompting to move to the next step is 'slow'. (Birdwhistell 1970: 159)

He insists that the steps are normative and symbolic, and have little to do with biology.

### Summary

In today's modern industrial society our commonplace understandings of time are dominated by the mechanical measurement of seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, months and years, and the use of these precise units to organise our activities. Many have pointed out that the development of western society, particularly in its industrial capitalist phase, has brought with it ever more precise and binding periodicities. These make possible the co-ordination of complex activities especially in our productive systems, and the rhythms of our factories, offices, and schools impose themselves on the rest of our lives. Thus it is possible to talk usefully, as Lewis and Weigert (1981) do, about 'organisational time'. Non-work time is then seen as residual, as something left-over after we have fulfilled the important obligations of our jobs and of the formal organisations in which we participate. There is obviously some truth in this; but it is a partial truth.

Our tendency to think about time principally in relation to work is part of a general bias in our efforts to describe and analyse the kind of societies in which we live. Sociologists stress the rational and instrumental characteristics of industrial societies. They devote a great deal of effort to



studying work places, particularly those which are large, bureaucratically structured and technically sophisticated. Their theories impress upon us the determining influences of systems of production. The objects of their study, at least, until recently, have generally been men. This leads to a distortion of our images of such societies and to a gross neglect of many aspects of social life which lie outside the work place. Critical awareness of this is beginning to appear. For example, Granovetter (1984) points to the disproportionate attention paid to large enterprises and the effects of this on our understanding of work processes and labour markets; Gershuny (1978 and 1983), Pahl (1984), and others, looking at the impacts of technical change and recession show how the nature of work itself is changing; and, of course, the women's movement has forced us to explore more seriously than before the role of women in the workforce and at home. This kind of awareness should lead us to question taken-for-granted views about the dominance of 'organisational time' and compel us to look in particular at the significance of women as the active agents in the shaping of 'social time'.

Alongside the rhythms and routines dictated by the workplace there exists something that we can call 'family time' or 'domestic time', a distinctive patterning of a large area of social life in which affective and expressive activity is intimately mingled with, rather than separated from, instrumental roles.

In the last few years changes in the nature of western economies have served to reveal the importance of 'non-work time', and more precisely, of 'family time'. Moore calls non-work time 'discretionary time' and defines it in terms of leisure, although authors like de Grazia reserve the term 'true leisure' purely for thought and contemplation. Basically 'discretionary time' is waking hours not spent in paid work and usually spent at home. It should perhaps be noted here that some writers, notably those of a Marxist persuasion, would not see this time as purely discretionary. For example, Sheila Rowbotham writes,

Leisure time is <sup>time</sup>not at work. It is what is left over to him (the worker). Leisure is time in which he is allowed to recover himself. But in fact the separation of work and leisure is a fragile one. A man can't switch off eight hours of his activity when he clocks out. The capitalist production process does not only occupy its operators at work, it pursues them in their rest, in their family, in bed, in their dreams. (Rowbotham: 1973: 51)

However, I will proceed on the assumption that 'discretionary time' is primarily 'free time' despite the implications of the above quote. In the modern world the problems of sheer survival have been lessened or removed entirely so that a substantial portion of life is likely to be 'discretionary' from the point of view of economic survival. Most workers, certainly most manual workers, have experienced some reduction in the hours they spend in formal employment, so-called flexi-time has allowed a good many to exercise a minimal discretion over the time they spend at work. Changes in technology have made possible the dispersal of

some economic activities so that part of the job may be done at home, and, most important of all, unemployment has left millions without the externally imposed rhythms of shifts or nine to five routines. The reduction of the working week has added discretionary time potentially available for familial or at least home-centred activity. Technological provision of home entertainment such as radios, stereos, television and videos has greatly improved the home and family's bargaining position with respect to competing leisure activities. The discretionary time available to women has been aided by a reduction in family size and advancements in household technology although these two changes may mean women leave the house more than before, perhaps to work in outside employment and this partly offsets other potential time increments.

As these changes in the home and the workplace have been recognised and as sociologists have begun to explore the world of the 'informal economy' or the lives of women so the salience of a temporal order which has always been there, paralleling that of the workplace, becomes more obvious. The fact that the greater part of discretionary time passes within the home and the family means that women gain control over how it is spent, by themselves and other members of their families, simply because they spend more time in the home and with the family than men do, even, it seems, if they have outside employment themselves.

It is essentially the wife and mother who tends to assert familial claims on discretionary time and to

assign and rearrange the use of the current temporal inventory. The decisional power of husbands is certainly variable between families, ethnic groups, 'classes', and societies, but the very temporal commitments of wives within the family tend to give them considerable authority in allocating and directing the time of others. (Moore: 75)

So, the important point to emphasis is that this counterveiling temporal order is femi-centric and reflects the distinctiveness of female roles and responsibilities. From it women derive security, identity and power.



## CHAPTER THREE

### LIFE-TIME TIMES

#### Introduction

This chapter is about the temporal structure of life events (patterns of the living and sequencing of major role transitions) over the course of a person's life span, as opposed to the microlevel rounds and routines of everyday, every week, every year time. It involves directing our attention to such terms as 'ageing', 'generations', 'cohorts', 'transitions', 'stages', 'careers', 'continuities', and 'discontinuities'. In my quest for ever clearer definitions of such words and in my desire to link them together in a meaningful and accessible way, I am indebted, in particular, to the work of Tamara Hareven, Glen Elder, Michael Anderson, and Stephen Kendrick. However, many other writers have helped me along the way in this dense field of ageing and I would like to begin with a quote from Andrew Weigert who in a section of his book 'Sociology of Everyday Life' writes about 'ageing as the universal experience of time marching on',

The foundation for understanding linear time is the experience of long-term changes in the body. In every society in the world, an individual's

everyday life is marked by the birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death of the body. This universal process provides the basis for an individual's sense of time as ineluctably marching on and of life as a lifecourse. The lifecourse is characterised by a sense of irreversibility and directionality, like the flow and course of a river. There is simply no turning back, no fountain of youth, which would enable anyone to reverse the linear time of the lifecourse. Furthermore, the direction of the process is undeniably predictable; each of us marches on from an unremembered birth to an unforeseen death. (1981: 215)

This basic biological cycle stretching and changing from birth to death is translated into social stages by the society, and the groups within that society, of which the ageing individual is a part. Age is differentiated and simple numerical years take on implicit social meanings. Elder writes,

Age differentiation is manifested in expectations and options that impinge on decision processes and the course of events that give shape to life stages, transitions and turning points. Such differentiation is based in part on the social meanings of age and the biological facts of birth, sexual maturity and death. These meanings have varied through social history and across cultures at points in time, as documented by evidence on socially recognised age categories, grades and classes. (1978:21)

Throughout the twentieth century, industrialised nations of the world have witnessed an increasing recognition of age differentiation along the life course, occurring primarily because of the simple fact that many more people are living many more years than was the case in previous centuries. Average life expectancy has increased by more than 50% this century. In

Scotland life expectancy in 1881-90 was 46.3 years, by 1977 it had increased to 74.4 years (Registrar General for Scotland Annual Report 1979, Table J1.1). Basic improvements in sanitation, immunisation and medical care have resulted in a decrease in the number of deaths during infancy, childhood, and, for women, the childbearing years. And the life expectancy difference between men and women has widened. In Scotland, in 1881-90 women could expect to live 3.6 years longer than their male counterparts, by 1977 this figure had risen to 6.2. Anderson, speaking of Britain, notes that by the second half of this century most people could expect to live to experience old age. 83% of women and 71% of men would reach sixty-five, after which age half these women could expect to be dead in another 16 years and half the men in another 11 years. In the 1970s the median female age of death was 80 whereas in the 1750s it had been 35. By the 1970s 98% of women could expect to live to the age of 20, 96% to forty-five, and 83% to sixty-five. Back in the 1750s 30% of females were dead by the age of five and a further 14% by the age of twenty-five. In the 1970s 16% of males died between the ages of 25 and 65 while in the 1750s this percentage was 60%.

Thus, for the eighteenth century population, death was a continual presence throughout life (and debilitating and often very painful illness of one's close associates and age peers an ever-present possibility from an early age) --- Even in the 1920s, high levels of adult and child mortality continued. One in ten males born in 1921 did not reach the age of 5 and a quarter of women of 25 in 1916 did not live to be 65. --- (Anderson 1985: 72 and 73)

New stages of life were only gradually recognised historically.

Their characteristics were experienced first in the lives of individuals. They were subsequently recognised in the culture and, finally, were institutionalised and received public affirmation. Public recognition occurs through the passing of legislation and the establishment of agencies for the realisation of the potential of people at a specific stage of life as well as for their protection<sup>with</sup> in those stages. (Hareven, 1981:150)

Hareven goes on from this to make clear that this is not to say that there was no awareness of a movement through age-related roles along the life course in earlier times but rather that this awareness was not institutionalised. The point is that the historical difference lies in the public recognition of these distinct stages of life with their specific needs and societally recognised functions. Such recognition and its accompaniments serves in turn to affect the experience of individuals going through such a stage, influencing transitions in and out of various stages either in terms of supports or constraints.

### Transitions and the Interweaving of Three Kinds of Time

The life-course approach looks at the interaction between individual development and collective family development, in the context of these ongoing changing historical conditions. That is, it addresses itself to looking at the intermeshing of three sorts of time - individual time, family time, and historical time



(i.e. changing historical conditions). It examines the synchronisation of individual behaviour with the collective behaviour of the family unit, as they change over time and in their relation to external historical conditions. It attempts to follow the movement of individuals through different family configurations and roles and is concerned with the determinants of timing patterns that affect these transitions. As Elder defines it, the life course encompasses 'pathways' by which individuals move throughout their lives fulfilling different roles sequentially or simultaneously,

The life course refers to pathways through the age-differentiated life span, to social patterns in the timing, duration, spacing and order of events;  
(1978:21)

Recent historical research in the social sciences has fruitfully brought together the study of the individual life-span which had tended to be the preserve of psychologists and the study of family development which has tended to be the domain of sociologists. In this context, Hagestad writes of this temporal intermeshing,

The family offers the social scientist a unique social arena, in which members of different generations, with different historical anchorings, meet in long-term bonds. It is an arena in which lives are structured and interwoven, in which meanings are created in a blending of historical forces, family realities, and individual needs and resources. Studying family relationships across generations promises new insights into how individual lives are shaped, how social change is mediated and how long term primary group ties are maintained. (Hagestad 1981: 11)

Anthropology demonstrated that human development is relative to different cultures, historical research has demonstrated that it is time-bound. It has become clear that childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, middle age and old age are not constant over time and the process of change in their respective definitions and experiences under different historical conditions have become important research topics in themselves. Elder argues that in the past, age itself was not the most critical aspect of the timing of life transitions. Changes in family status and in accompanying roles were often as important as age, if not more significant. On the individual level, Elder and Hareven see the crucial question as being how people plan and organise their roles over their life course and time their life transitions both on the non-familial as well as the familial level, in such areas as entry into and exit from school or the labour force, migration, leaving home or returning home, marriage, and setting up an independent household.

The metaphor that captures best the interrelationship of individual transitions and changing family configurations is the movement of schools of fish. As people move over their life course in family units, they group and regroup themselves. The functions they adopt in these different clusters also vary significantly over their life course. (Hareven 1981: 147)

In the nineteenth century when mortality and fertility were both higher than they are today family roles were less connected with age. Older children frequently took charge of their younger siblings, with girls, in particular, carrying a major share of

the responsibility for raising the younger children and acting as surrogate mother if their mother worked outside the home, or if she had died. Children tended to be spread over<sup>A</sup> large age spectrum within the family which had important implications for family relationships as well as for their preparation for adult roles. They grew up with large numbers of siblings and were exposed to a greater variety of models from which to choose than they would have been in a smaller family. The smaller overlap of life between children and their parents was also significant. The oldest child was the one most likely to overlap with its parents into adulthood, the youngest child the least likely. The oldest children were most likely to begin an independent life or career before their parents reached dependency in old age with the younger children being the most likely to carry responsibilities for parental support and to overlap in adulthood with a widowed mother. Similarly, the oldest child had the greatest chance to overlap with grandparents, the youngest child the least. Late-marrying children were likely to be responsible for the support of a widowed mother, while early-marrying children depended on their parents' household space after marriage.

This was all against a background of uncertainties and precariousness that made an orderly sequence of progression along stages of the life cycle virtually impossible. During the twentieth century there has been 'a tendency for most of the population to concentrate their passage through any given

transition into an increasingly small number of years' and from the middle of the century,

Most people... planned their lives on the assumption that they would follow the 'normal' pattern at about the 'normal' age... Both demographically and culturally we can thus, I would argue, legitimately see in the 1970s a 'modern' life cycle, one which has some highly structured and specific aspects ... this 'modern' life cycle is historically highly specific, both in terms of timings and in terms of structures. (Anderson 1985:69-70)

In modern society young people are seen as making individual decisions about work, marriage and living arrangements. Transitions at this stage in the life course are seen as being a result of individual decisions but as influenced by cultural expectations associated with age. However, until recently these seemingly individual transitions were treated as family moves and therefore had to be synchronised with other family needs and strategies. For instance, when it came to marriage the event could be much more than a consideration of romantic love between two individuals because it depended on finding a job, a house and the support of aging parents. Collective family needs tended to take precedence over individual preferences.

Social historians such as Hareven argue that in Western society today, the major burden of family relationships are emotional, while in the nineteenth century, they were more instrumental, heavily weighted toward economic needs and tasks. Hareven points out that it is clear from the evidence that family



relationships were based on socially sanctioned mutual obligations that went above personal affection and sentiment. Parents brought up their children to expect to start work as soon as they could and support their parents when the need arose. This view of family life still persists today but in the absence of any kind of welfare state it can be said to have been previously more crucial, meaning for many the difference between life and death.

These obligations of mutual help and assistance rested on established social norms which were very powerful and involved sanctions against younger generations failing to put their family's interest before their own. Hareven distinguishes between two types of help sought from family members. One was routine help on a daily basis which was expected to be available, when necessary, from distant as well as close kin, while the other kind was more structured and long-range help across the life-course, often of a financial nature, which only close kin were involved in exchanging.

Mutual obligations and needs within the family placed severe pressures on the timing of transitions, and obviously caused trouble when individual preferences came into conflict with the family's collective timetable. Children had to leave school early to help support their younger siblings; and sons and daughters, usually the latter, had to postpone or abandon marriage to support their aging parents.

Slow and uneven transitions of individuals out of the family of origin and into independent adult roles were the result of a more continuous integration within the family of origin. This meant greater continuity in the obligations of young people to their parents, which reached more deeply into their own adulthood and often overlapped with their own parental responsibilities. It also entailed a prolonged apprenticeship for future family roles which individuals carried out in their family of origin and, therefore, a less abrupt transition when they did marry and become parents.

One widely held myth about the past is that the timing of family transitions was once more orderly and stable than it is today. The complexity that governs family life today and the variations in family roles and in transitions into them are frequently contrasted to this more placid past. The historical record, however, frequently reveals precisely the opposite condition. Patterns of family timing in the past were often more complex, more diverse, and less orderly than they are today: voluntary and involuntary demographic changes that have come about since the late nineteenth century have in fact paradoxically resulted in greater uniformity in the timing of transitions along the life course, despite greater societal complexity. (Hareven 1977: 61)

Demographic, economic and cultural factors have combined to account for differences in the timing of life transitions this century. Social values governing life-course timing have changed under different historical circumstances. For example, the age at which men or women are considered eligible for marriage varies in different societies and periods. What is considered a violation of 'normal' sequences in the timing of family events

also varies among different societies. Normative influence constitutes a major force in structuring expected timetables and sequences. There is an appropriate time for leaving school, leaving home, getting married, retirement, etc. And as individuals and families move through the age structure, they are made aware of whether they are on time, early or relatively late on events by an informal system of rewards and sanctions.

Under historical conditions where most of the educational, economic, and welfare functions are concentrated in the family, the timing of transitions within the family was more significant than in modern society. (Hareven 1977: 60)

Historical changes have impinged upon the timing of family events by providing the institutional or social conditions under which such transitions can be implemented or impeded. For example, it would have been ludicrous to enforce school attendance if public schools had not been readily available and it would have been difficult to impose compulsory retirement without institutionalised social security or old-age pensions.

By the middle of this century entry into and out of the labour force was relatively structured. The majority of the population began their working lives at the age of fifteen and later sixteen and the majority retired from work at pensionable age, by the age of sixty in the case of women and sixty-five in the case of men. In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and part of the twentieth century movement into and out of work had been much more gradual. A recognisable 'age of retirement' was virtually an unknown concept as withdrawal from the work force came as a

result of infirmity or was dependent on a private source of income. In the 1851 census, for example, even at the age of eighty half of all men did not indicate that they had left employment. (Anderson 1985) Changes only began to take place towards the end of last century owing to attacks from trade unions and the growth of larger organisations which found it difficult to operate with such an arbitrary system of starting and finishing employment. Many of these concerns were the first to initiate set ages for retirement often linked with pension schemes to make this possible and desirable. The means-tested pension was introduced in 1908, extended in 1925 and again in 1945 so that particularly in the inter-war period there was little incentive for people to continue in employment after pensionable age.

The transition into adulthood has taken on a new uniformity, with movement into adult roles becoming increasingly compressed and synchronised. Whereas passages used to be gradual, one at a time, they now take place in a much shorter time period, with more overlap between transitions. The new uniformity here is generally recognised as being the result of a shift from family considerations, norms and controls to general cultural age norms. By looking at five early life transitions (exit from school, work-force entry, departure from the family of origin, marriage and establishment of a household) among youth, Modell, Furstenberg and Hershberg's analysis showed that in contrast to an assumed prolongation of growing-up the period of youth had



narrowed considerably, resulting in a more concentrated pattern of status changes. Family transitions are now more often mixed with completion of schooling and work entry. Elder points out that this leads the authors to conclude that this change reflects a basic change in the family economy, from an era distinguished by a precarious margin of economic survival in which households relied upon the earnings of young people to consumption-oriented households supported by the earnings of husband and wife and buttressed by security provisions of the welfare state. As Modell et al. point out

Transitions are today more contingent, more integrated because they are constrained by a set of formal institutions. 'Timely' action to nineteenth century families consisted of helpful response in times of trouble; in the twentieth century timeliness connotes adherence to a schedule. (Modell et al 1976: 30)

As Anderson points out, since the 1960s most people of both sexes have married during their late teens or early twenties, the median age for women being twenty-one and for men twenty-three, and most set up their own household at about this time. In 1979 well over 95% of children aged sixteen lived in their parent's home but by the age of twenty-seven 80% did not. Marriage patterns, by the seventies, had become very highly structured especially for women. 95% of women could expect to marry, with 80% of them doing so between the ages of seventeen to twenty-five, and the vast majority before the age of thirty. There was only a slight change in the median age of marriage from 1700 to 1970, between lows of 21 around 1800 and 1970, and a high of 24

during the First World War although normatively there was by the seventies a 'right age to marry' which had not been found before the Second World War. However, within marriage the pattern of childbearing changed very significantly. Women born in the late eighteenth century produced an average family size of nearly six while women born in the twenties and since have produced just over two children in marriage. For the majority of couples their years of child bearing were few and on average they had their last child within seven years of marriage. By the time the couple reached their early fifties that last child would be married, and well before their sixties their last grandchild would be born.

Thus, it is a recent phenomenon that most couples live to know most of their grandchildren and linked with this that great grandparenthood has become 'statistically normal'. It is in their impact on two or more generations that the demographic changes are at their most dramatic.

The resulting effects on the possibility of relationships between the generations were considerable. An early eighteenth century woman's last child married on average in the same year that her husband died and she herself died 13 years before the birth of her last grandchild. By the 1861 cohort, however, women could expect their husbands to live around seven years after the marriage of their last child (and thus <sup>to see</sup> <sup>at least</sup> some of their grandchildren born) and <sup>the</sup> women themselves five years beyond the birth of their last grandchild. Thus, the grandparents of the inter-war period were the first of whom a majority would even know all their grandchildren. Subsequent events were equally dramatic. By the 1970s, even men could expect, on the assumptions made here, to live some 14 years after the birth of their last

grandchild and women could expect another twenty-three years of life, just long enough on average to see all their grandchildren married if they married at the median age. (Anderson 1985:7475)

Similarly, when looking at the situation in America, Uhlenberg (1974) suggests that over the past century demographic changes have tended to effect greater uniformity in the life course of American families and have considerably increased the opportunity for intact survival of the family unit over the lifetime of its members. Butler comments that 'those caught up in a romanticised portrayal of the past sometimes create the impression that something quite destructive has happened to the family' (1981: 2) when in fact just the opposite might be said to be the case with a growth this century of the three-generational or multigenerational family. The extended families of the past were in large part the result of high fertility and were characterised by many siblings, aunts and uncles but not necessarily many generations since there simply were not enough survivors. One indication of this is that in the 50 years from 1920 to 1970, the likelihood for a ten year old youngster to have two living grandparents has risen from 40 to 75%. As a result of the decline in mortality since the late nineteenth century, the chances for children to survive into adulthood and to grow up with their siblings and both parents alive have increased considerably.

As we have seen, state institutions have gradually taken over the functions of welfare, education and social control that



had previously been performed in the family leading to a greater conformity in the timing of life transitions. The gradual introduction of age-related requirements, such as compulsory school attendance, child-labour legislation, and mandatory retirement have all combined to impose more rigid patterns of timing in the larger society and, in the process, have also caused greater uniformity in the timing of family behaviour. Thus modern society represents a paradox in terms of timing. While on the one hand involuntary factors affecting timing of family roles have declined and, on the other hand, voluntary means of manipulating timing - in postponing or reversing transitions, and in juggling a variety of roles - have increased, the resulting 'liberalisation' of timing patterns has been accompanied by a greater rigidity and uniformity in the timing of family transitions than had been experienced in the past. The increase in uniformity in family time has coincided with a growing diversity both in career and opportunity choices and in familial and non-familial arrangements.

The increased chance for stability in the family as a result of diminishing involuntary disruptions (e.g. decline in mortality) has been counteracted by rising voluntary ones (e.g. increasing divorce rates) and we may enter a new era of instability and decreasing uniformity. Indeed Hagestad writes,

...The cohorts born in the early 1950s may go down in history as having had the ideal childhood, growing up in a sea of tranquillity between disruptions due to mortality and disruption due to divorce. (1981: 18)



He estimated that currently 19% of children less than 18 live in one-parent households and that if current trends continue 45% of children born in the 1970s will spend some time in one-parent households before the age of 18. And although he does not expand upon the phenomenon Anderson notes,

By the 1970s ... the massive disruption of childhood through the death of one or more parents, which had involved at least a quarter of children before their sixteenth birthday as late as the 1830s, largely ceased. But, against a background where 'till death us do part' meant on average 45 years, family break-up did not disappear ... rates of dissolution through divorce had reached by 1980 almost exactly the levels achieved by death alone for those marrying at the average age in the 1820s ... (1985: 78)

### Changing Times for Women

The chances for women to survive to adulthood and to fulfill the normatively established script of their family lives have increased steadily between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Using American census data, Peter Uhlenberg identified five life patterns through a comparison of events in white and non-white cohorts of American women, 1890-94 to 1930-34; early death - female dies between the ages of fifteen and fifty; spinster - female survives, but does not marry before the age of fifty; childless - female survives and marries but has no live births; unstable marriage, with children - female survives, marries and bears at least one child, but first marriage is broken before the age of fifty; and preferred

- female reaches fifty with at least one child and her first marriage still intact. Across successive cohorts of women who were alive at fifteen Uhlenberg found an upward trend in the prevalence of the preferred life pattern which has been uniform for the majority of the population since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Prior to 1900, only about 40% of the female population in the United States experienced this ideal family cycle. The remainder either never married, never reached marriageable age, died before childbirth, or were widowed while their offspring were still young children. However, Uhlenberg does add that among women the preferred life cycle is increasingly threatened by voluntary changes such as divorce and separation or childlessness. More recent cohorts show a trend toward later marriage, delayed childbearing and increased marital instability.

For women, demographic changes combined with earlier marriage and earlier completion of maternal roles, have meant a more extended period of life without children in their middle years. In the nineteenth century the combination of a later age of marriage and higher fertility provided little opportunity for a family to experience an 'empty nest stage'. Prior to the decline in mortality among young adults, marriage was frequently broken by the death of a spouse before the end of the child-rearing period. Even when fathers survived the child-rearing years, they rarely lived beyond the marriage of their second

child. As a result of higher fertility, children were spread over a wider age range, frequently the youngest child was just entering school as the oldest was preparing for marriage. This combination of later marriage, higher fertility and widely spaced childbearing, resulted in a different timing of family transitions. Individuals became parents later, but carried child-rearing responsibilities almost until the end of their lives. The lives of parents overlapped with those of their children for shorter periods than they do today. In the British context, Anderson has shown that after the Second World War but particularly by the 1970s the average woman, aided by the fall in the age of marriage, finished childbearing by the time she was twenty-eight and her last grandchild was born when she was fifty-six whereas in the 1750s the ages for these events had been thirty-nine and seventy-seven. Put another way an average woman of the 1970s could expect to live twenty-five years after the birth of her last grandchild compared with the average woman of the 1750s who died twelve years before her last grandchild was born. (Anderson 1985) Hagestad writes that age differences between generations have decreased with what Neugarten and Moore call 'the quickening of the family life cycle'.

The generational acceleration, coupled with the increase in general life expectancy, will make multi-generational families increasingly common... Of particular importance for the present discussion is the emergence of long-term intergenerational bonds between adults ... (Hagestad 1981: 22)

As Uhlenberg and Anderson point out, a central factor in the changing circumstances and life-course timing of women's lives has been the massive fall in family size. In Scotland, over the last hundred years, there has been a massive reduction in the size of working-class families. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the average completed family size in Scotland was well up towards six or seven (Census of Scotland 1911 Vol III, Table XLVI) whereas today this figure is around two. The reduction in family size has been greater for the working-class than the middle class and throughout the century there has been a decline in the difference between working-class and middle-class family size. This decline was particularly marked between 1964 and 1977.

The convergence can be seen very clearly in terms of the proportion of births in a particular class which are of parity five or greater. In the early 1960s, fifth and further births accounted for between 18% and 29% of births to Social Class V mothers, 13%-14% in Social Class IV, 10% in Social Class III, 7%-8% in Social Class II, and finally 3-4% to Social Class I. During the following years, as the general birth rate fell, these proportions all fell rapidly. By the years 1979 to 1981, the proportion of births to mothers in Social Class V which were of parity five or greater had fallen to below 5%. For Social Classes III and IV the figure was below 3%, and for Social Classes I and II below 2%. (Figures from Social Structure of Modern Scotland Project, 1982)



As Uhlenberg and Anderson also point out, marriage patterns have been of great significance in the life-time times of women. The most significant trend in marriage patterns in Scotland over the last fifty years has been that more women have been getting married and have been marrying younger. There has been a lowering of the average age at first marriage and a decrease in the proportion of people never marrying. It is perhaps worth noting here, that for some reason which is not yet entirely clear to sociologists or demographers, it was the case that at the end of last century and the beginning of this fewer people, and especially women, got married in Scotland than got married south of the border. So, in this sense it can be said that in Scotland the effect of changing marriage patterns has been more dramatic than elsewhere.

The mean age of marriage for women in Scotland did not change very much throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, staying at around twenty-five. By the 1920s this had risen slightly to twenty-six, where it stayed until the 1930s. Since then the age of first marriage for women declined to a level of 22.4 years in 1971, since which time it has altered only slightly. In the years following the Second World War, rising living standards and full employment made it possible to set up a household at a much younger age while the supply of houses in which to do this greatly improved.

All the Registrar General's Social Classes have experienced

a decline in the average age of marriage. However, there are still quite large differences in the age of marriage between classes. It is much lower for manual groups, particularly the unskilled. This difference is likely to be a reflection of first, the fact that those entering non-manual occupations will stay in the education system longer than their manual counterparts, and secondly, of different housing patterns between classes, with middle-class groups seeing being in a position to be an owner-occupier and marriage as going together.

Figures which clearly show up the age difference in marriage between women of different social classes are those referring to the proportion of legitimate first births to mothers under twenty. In 1955, 15% of legitimate first births in Social Class V were to mothers under twenty, with the proportion falling off towards Social Class I, where it was only 2%. The proportion moved up steadily throughout the sixties for all classes, particularly among manual groups, and dramatically in Social Class V. In the seventies when the overall birth-rate was at an all-time low, 45% of first time married mothers in Social Class V were under twenty, compared with a peak of 6%-7% around 1970 for those in Social Classes I and II.

So far we have been talking about the impact of demographic change on the timing of women's life courses, in terms of marriage and child-bearing. However, at the same time other changes have been occurring in women's lives which are perhaps equally important. These are changes connected with women's

employment. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, it was relatively rare for married women to go out to work on a systematic basis, nowadays it is virtually the norm. Demographic changes and changes in employment opportunities have combined to transform the life course experience of working-class women in terms of work and the family.

According to official statistics it was relatively rare for married women to go out to work until well after the Second World War. For example, according to the 1921 Census of Scotland only 5% of married women in Scotland were 'gainfully occupied' - a category roughly equivalent to the modern 'economically active' - meaning working or looking for work.

However, this was a relatively restrictive definition and, as I found out in talking to my respondents, married women who worked on a more or less casual basis, doing jobs like cleaning, washing or sewing on a regular but informal basis, did not regard themselves as doing 'real' work like their husbands did, and probably wouldn't have been picked up by the Census as being 'gainfully occupied'. Similarly women who did jobs like potato picking on a seasonal basis, or who moved in and out of the labour force, would not be picked up by the Census as being 'gainfully occupied'. So in all likelihood a large range of married women's work for pay did not show up in official figures.

In terms of this restricted official definition of 'gainful

occupation' or 'economic activity', the 1921 Census probably represented a low point, with more, but not many more, married women having gone out to work in the nineteenth century, especially in the early part of the century when textiles was the dominant industry.

Both World Wars, and especially the Second, produced temporary changes in this situation as married women were mobilised to help the war effort. In both cases the employment of married women fell back immediately after the end of the conflict. However, in terms of official statistics the period since 1951 has seen a sustained rise in the number of married women going out to work. From being the exception, it has become the rule. In 1951 the economic activity rate for married women, aged fifteen to sixty-five, was 15.3%, in 1961 it was 24.6%, in 1971 it was 44.0%, and in 1981 it was 54.4%. (Social Change and the 1981 Census of Scotland Project, 1985)

In the 1950s the rise in economic activity was fastest for married women after their child-bearing years, women in their forties and fifties, so that by 1971 there was a pronounced trough in the age distribution of working women, with women in the child-bearing ages tending to stay at home. More recently, the rise has been fastest among younger women, those in their twenties and thirties, as families have got smaller and more closely spaced, releasing women earlier to return to the labour market. The increase in married women going out to work has affected women in all social classes, at all stages in the life



course, those with children and those without children. (Social Change and the 1981 Census of Scotland Project 1985).

There are several main reasons for this greater tendency for married women to go out to work. First, in terms of the pattern of industrial change the years since the Second World War have seen a great expansion of employment in the service sector at the expense of manufacturing. The kind of clerical, cleaning and welfare jobs found in the service sector have gone disproportionately to women. In addition, since the Second World War, there has been a declining number of single women to do these jobs. The average age of marriage has been falling and fewer women have remained single. And besides this, young women have been staying on longer in full-time education, thus further reducing the number of single women available to satisfy the burgeoning demand for female labour. All this meant that employers had to turn to married women to fill their vacancies.

It is no coincidence that this increase in the employment of married women has largely taken the form of part-time employment, enabling women to attempt to balance the demands of employment and the family. Some of the jobs which have absorbed large numbers of married women, such as cleaning and catering jobs, are almost entirely part-time.

## Conclusion

This chapter began by introducing the concepts of life course timing and transitions, largely in terms of the analyses of Elder, Hareven and Anderson. I have tried to move from such general and historical discussions towards assessing the actual impact of historical change on life course timing. Over the last century, and particularly over the last fifty years, broad structural changes can be seen as having transformed the life course experiences of work and the family of working-class women. Before the Second World War the typical working-class woman would leave school, work for a good number of years - perhaps ten or twelve, get married relatively late, have a large family over a large number of years, and have little likelihood of returning to work on a permanent basis. However, at the time of my interview the pattern for the typical working-class woman would run something like this - leave school, work for a few years - maybe two or three, get married quite young, have a small closely spaced family, followed by a return to work, at first perhaps on a part-time basis before going full-time as the children grow older. Thus before the war the longest time women spent in outside employment tended to be from the time they left school to the time they got married and had children. However, nowadays it seems to be the case that women are more likely to be engaged in outside employment for the longest period at quite a different part of the life course, that is, after getting married and having their children.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LINKING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

#### The Problem of Generations

I feel it is necessary to make a slight digression here in order to define better a word or concept which continually crops up in the literature on life-course timing. Largely as a result of the increasing proportion of the world's population which is growing to a fair old age and the consequent problems, there has recently been a lot of literature concerning itself with generations and ageing. However, the 'experts' themselves seem fairly muddled in their thinking and sometimes appear to be at odds with each other when it comes to precise definitions. I have consulted what seemed to be the main recent works and will offer here what I think is a reasonable and comprehensive synthesis of these pieces. The topic of 'generations' and all its connotations is well worth persevering with because it does highlight superbly well the intermeshing nature of individual time, family time and historical time and the difficulty inherent in discussing such overlapping spheres of social life. Investigating 'generations' in their many definitions furnishes a

way of looking both at the creation of identity and the onward march of social change. It affords an illustration of the to-ing and fro-ing between the individual and society, meaning and structure.

I will give examples, although by no means exhaustive, of how various writers have defined or used 'generation'. The main problem seems to be that no-one can quite decide whether it is best to use the word 'generation' or 'cohort' for their particular purposes. The choice does largely depend upon what exactly is being looked at. Karl Mannheim wrote a lengthy and by now famous piece 'The Problem of Generations' which appears in his 'Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge' (1952). He begins his work with a discussion of the history of the 'problem' where he looks at what the French positivists and the German romantics had to say on the matter of 'generation' being used as a temporal unit in the history of intellectual evolution. The former were anxious to find a general law to express the rhythm of historical development, based on the biological law of the limited life-span of man and the overlap of new and old generations. The aim was to understand the changing patterns of intellectual and social currents directly in biological terms and construct a curve of the progress of the human species based on a chronological table. The main problem given the task in hand was to decide upon the average period of time taken for the older generation to be superceded by the new in public life, 'and principally, to find the natural starting-point in history from which to reckon a new period' (1952: 280) In this sense, most of these writers took



the duration of a generation to be thirty years, on the grounds that during the first thirty years of life people are still learning, that individual creativeness on average begins only at that age, and that at sixty a man quits public life. The problem of generations for the French positivists was then to be able to use them as evidence in favour of their unilinear conception of progress.

This type of thought ... from the outset adopted a mechanistic, externalised concept of time, and attempted to use it as an objective measure of unilinear progress by virtue of its expressibility in quantitative terms. (Mannheim 1952:281)

It was this concept of progress which was challenged by the romantic and historicist German mind. The Germans considered the problem of generations to be the evidence that it afforded against the concept of unilinear development in history.

The problem of generations is seen<sup>here</sup> as the problem of the existence of an interior time that cannot be measured but only experienced in purely qualitative terms. (Mannheim 1952: 281)

Dilthey distinguished between the qualitative and the quantitative concept of time. He saw the idea of using 'generations' as the units in the history of ideas as being important because it allowed the purely external units of history, hours, months, years, etc. to be replaced by a concept of measure operating from within. His second conclusion was also illuminating on this topic for he pointed to the significance not

just of the succession of one generation after another but of their co-existence.

The same dominant influences deriving from the prevailing intellectual, social and political circumstances are experienced by contemporary individuals both in their early, formative, and in their later years. They are contemporaries, they constitute one generation, just because they are subject to common influences. (Mannheim 1952: 282)

At this point in his work, Mannheim gives a lengthy quote from Heidegger which I think bears repeating here because it describes the intermeshing of times and of individual and society in a rather different and poetic way,

Fate is not the sum of individual destinies, any more than togetherness can be understood as a mere appearing together of several subjects. Togetherness in the same world, and the consequent preparedness for a distinct set of possibilities, determines the direction of individual destinies in advance. The power of Fate is then unleashed in the peaceful intercourse and the conflict of social life. The inescapable fate of living in and with one's generation completes the full drama of individual human existence. (1952: 282)

The other earlier source to which Mannheim refers is that of the German art historian, Pinder, whose insights into the subject included the important one of 'the non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous'. Different generations live at the same time but since experienced time is the only real time, they must all in fact be living in qualitatively quite different subjective eras.

'Everyone lives with people of the same and of different ages, with a variety of possibilities of experience facing them all alike. But for each the "same time" is a different time - that is, it represents a different period of his self, which he can only share with people of his own age.'  
(Mannheim 1952: 283)

We will encounter Mannheim's essay again throughout this chapter. Here I am using it as a source-document to indicate the historical developments of the meaning of the word 'generation'. The important characteristic of generation units which Mannheim pointed to is that their location and effectiveness in a social system cannot be explained adequately on the basis of age alone. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition for their existence. Other factors like class, race, religion, occupation, etc. have to be introduced to explain a unit's ability or lack of it to make something of historical experience.

Following Mannheim's work, Abrams talks about this in his version of the 'problem of generations' which he sees as being 'a problem of the mutual phasing of two different calendars: the calendar of the life-cycle of the individual and the calendar of historical experience' (1982: 240). He sees it as being a process of identity-formation, constructing or reconstructing identity, which to a certain extent is dependent on biological and social factors but is ultimately dependent on historical events. It is historical events which provide the crucial opportunities for constructing new versions of meanings about oneself and others in the world. However, it has to be

remembered that some groups or categories of people are more exposed to these experiences, that deny past identities and affirm the possibility of new ones, than others. Some age-sets, such as youth, are more likely than others to make creative use of historical resources and so are certain people **within** various age-sets.

The actual definition of the word 'generation' to which Abrams' deliberations lead him is a rather general one,

Sociologically, then, a generation is that span of time within which identity is assembled on the basis of an unchanged system of meanings and possibilities. A sociological generation can thus encompass many biological generations. (1982: 256)

He bases this on his reading of Rudolf Heberle who suggested 'a generation consists of contemporaries of approximately the same age' but for whom age is established not by the calendar of years but by a calendar of events and experiences:

A social generation cannot be defined in biological terms and in terms of definite age groups, but has to be defined in terms of common and joint experiences, sentiments and ideas. 'A generation is thus a new way of feeling and understanding of life, which is opposed to the former way or at least different from it'. A generation is a phenomenon of collective mentality and morality. (The members) of a generation feel themselves linked by a community of standpoints, of beliefs and wishes. (Heberle quoted in Abrams 1982: 258)

Lillian Troll and Vern Bengston (1979) say in their article



about generations that their surveys of the literature have noted a tendency to confound different concepts of generations' but they decide a useful strategy is to define 'generation' in three different ways - to look at 'generations of family lineage', 'generations as developmental levels' and 'generations as age strata (or cohorts) in the social system'.

### **Generations of Family Lineage**

Generations form the axis of the family in the form of the ascendant-descendant lineage chain of grandparent-parent-child, with the 'first generation' being the oldest one currently alive, although it is, as Troll and Bengston point out, appropriate to bear in mind that in some instances it might be meaningful to take note of parents or other relatives who are dead but still exert some kind of influence upon surviving family members. Position in family generation rank or lineage is independent of chronological age. A second generation member, for example, may be anywhere from, say, two seconds to seventy-two years old depending in part on the longevity of the family in question.

It must also be remembered that lineage positions can be different along maternal and paternal lines. One could be second generation on the maternal side and first generation on the paternal side and so be influenced by a different number of ancestors on each side of the family. This could well lead us on to point to demographic reasons for the increased influence of women in the family for not only do they tend to live longer than

men, they have usually married younger, have married men older than themselves, and have become a parent at a younger age. Thus, it turns out that women, relative to men, can have more impact on new generations because they are more likely than men to be involved in child-rearing and there are likely to be more of them around.

The final point which Troll and Bengston make about 'generations of family lineage' is about the time between them which affects the number of co-existent generations. This temporal interval is related to biological facts, like age of sexual maturity, and social ones, such as age of marriage, or social maturity. Fertility is also important here, especially the number of children per set of parents and the distance between these children. As an example, Troll and Bengston take the case of a thirty year time span between the oldest and youngest child in one lineage, with a lot of children spread in between over these years and suggest that in this instance distinctions between lineage generations would be blurred and solidarity among siblings lessened.

A final point to be made about generations of the lineage variety is one suggested by Abrams when he points out that the family in this sense allows its members to transcend in part the limits of physical time by intentionally identifying with predecessors who are ancestors and successors who are descendants.

## Generations as Developmental Levels

During the course of their life, individuals move through a 'developmental progression' that can be divided into segments and which are also usually called 'generations'. For example, adolescence is taken as being a different generation from childhood, or old age from middle age. This developmental system of generations is linked more directly to age than is the family system but it is still not exactly matched. When talking about the patterning of individual life time, Hagestad opens with a quote from Smelser and Halpern,

in our life time, some stages of life have been truncated, while others have been created. (1981: 14)

He points out that earlier this century there was a general recognition of adolescence and later of 'youth'. Recently even more differentiations have come into being, this time referring to the second half of life. 'Middle age' has been clearly delineated owing to increasing longevity and improved health and the altered rhythm of events in the life cycle; and old age has been divided into young-old and old-old, with the former having emerged because of increased longevity and a drop in the age of retirement. While it is commonly argued that the first three decades of life have become more structured and uniform, many writers would suggest that the later decades of life have shown increasing variance in life patterns, complexity, and, sometimes, lack of

clear cultural structuring.

The developmental or ontogenetic status of people in each lineage position must be taken into account in any consideration of generations in the family. A parent's influence on a young child or that child's influence on its parent is different depending on the age of the parent in question. If grandparents are 'young' in outlook and have an extrovert manner they have a considerably different impact on the rest of the family than if they feel 'old' and are withdrawn. As Troll and Bengston further point out, the effect can go both ways. Belonging to the oldest living generation in a five-generation family, knowing that one is next in line to die, or looking down on a chain of descendants could make a person feel, think and act very 'old', whereas another person of the same age whose first child has just got married could feel much younger. As far as the youngest generation is concerned, having a long line of living grandparents or great grandparents could have an important effect on one's relations with and feeling towards one's parents.

#### **Generations as age strata (or cohorts) in the social system**

Troll and Bengston's third definition refers to 'generation' as meaning 'age strata' or 'cohort' in society. This process of generations does not have its base in the family or the individual but rather in the wider social system, although as we shall see, it is particularly connected with the process of generational development concerning the individual. It cuts



across developmental and family statuses, simultaneously influencing both, and is the idea of generations developed by Mannheim with which we began our discussion. According to Troll and Bengston, such age groups include all people born at the same time who have been raised under similar circumstances, both historical and cultural, and were thereby subject to similar socialisation. Members of such an age cohort may share many attitudes and values, see themselves as belonging together, and be recognised as belonging together by others. This is the kind of generation implied by the terms 'youth culture', 'the establishment', and 'the aged'. The particular age cohort to which a grandparent, a parent, or a grandchild belongs may affect all their relationships. Troll and Bengston give the example of parents who grew up in the Depression probably treating their children differently from parents who grew up after World War II, even if they happen to be dealing with children the same age and have many other characteristics in common.

Mannheim (1952) made a distinction between **lifelong** and **temporary** age groups which might be worth bearing in mind. In the former, membership is maintained throughout life. Even though the members get older, they continue to belong to the group into which they were born, 'those born at the turn of the century' or 'those born during the Depression'. Mannheim suggests that the function of the temporary age group, on the other hand, whose membership lasts for only a limited period of the life span, seems to be largely that of easing a transition from one period of life to another that is very different. Such

groups emerge at times of developmental crises, particularly during the transition from youth to adulthood. Once adult status is reached, they may well dissolve and their former members merge with all other adults.

It is in this final sense of the word 'generation' where much of the confusion in the literature arises. Because in the aforementioned paper, Troll and Bengston are very careful to cover all the usages of 'generation', they use 'generation' and 'cohort' interchangeably. However, difficulties arise when authors do this without being so precise. There seems to be a general preference for 'generation' and 'cohort' to refer to different things. Hagestad writes,

The term generation refers to lineage position within families, whereas cohort refers to individuals born at a particular point in historical time <sup>people</sup> who are likely to share 'life imprints' of historical events. (1981: 12)

And he points out that family members do not file into generation by cohort, using the example of the present grandparent generation which includes individuals ranging in age from their upper thirties to the nineties.

Glen Elder is very much in favour of making a distinction between 'generation' and 'cohort' mainly because studies which are about generations tend to concentrate on the transmission process between parents and offspring without taking the

realities of the historical context into account. He points out that generational status is often a poor index of historical location. Individuals who occupy the same generational position in terms of family position are not forced to have grown up at the same time. He cites the example of the grandparents in Bengston's study who actually varied in birth year by as much as twenty years. Elder considers that this time span is too broad for very precise analysis. The parent generation in Hill's study of multi-generational families is particularly problematic according to Elder because he sees it as being composed of two meaningful groups or cohorts, characterised by marriage in the 1920s and the 1930s. Elder points out that this may be an important distinction because his own study which looked at the Depression years in America revealed that couples married before it started had more children and a more varied set of career timetables than the younger couples.

The main point to arise from all this is that 'cohort' is much more closely linked with age than is 'generation' since the latter refers to a position or a role, usually within the family with relating age being indeterminate.

### **Instructive Studies**

Finally in this chapter, I wish to briefly describe two connected studies which used this method quite brilliantly, those of Thomas and Zaniecki and of Glen Elder. Thomas and Zaniecki's study 'The Polish Peasant' appears to be perhaps the seminal work

in this whole field and it was the more remarkable for it appeared, as Elder notes, at a time when 'prominent theories were divorced from the behavioural world of groups and empirical studies paid little attention to historical trends and contexts'. Nisbet wrote,

I believe,

'The Polish Peasant' remains, without question, the greatest single study done thus far by an American sociologist. Had American sociology managed to follow the lines of guidance contained in this remarkable work, it would not be so largely lost today in its tortuous and too often vapid categories and concepts relating to social systems and their asserted properties.  
(Nisbet 1969: 316)

The object of the work was to describe how the traditional life of families and individuals had been affected by the historical process of migration to industrial towns in Poland, Germany, and particularly America, by using a variety of methods including letters, life histories, and field observations. For Thomas the guiding principle of his work and social science generally was that it,



must reach the actual human experiences and attitudes which constitute the full, live and active social reality beneath the formal organisation of social . . . phenomena . . . A social institution can be fully understood only if we do not limit ourselves to the abstract study of its formal organisation, but analyze the way in which it appears in the personal experience of various members of the group and follow the influence it has upon their lives . . . (in Volkhart 1951, p. 147, quoted in Elder 1978).

So, as Elder notes,

the study's lasting value does not reside in this foundation or in the data analysis and facts produced --- It is clearly a flawed research effort from the standpoint of measuring concepts and subjecting ideas and hypotheses to empirical test --- It is in the conceptual area, I believe, that we find the chief contribution of 'The Polish Peasant' and of Thomas's writings as a whole, particularly in a sensitizing approach to social change and the family; a processual view of group and individual experience in changing and historically specific times, but one that does not lose sight of the larger context and its structural trends. (Elder 1978: S17)

Elder alerts us to the fact that in his work 'Sourcebook for Social/Origins ' Thomas had outlined a model of crisis situations which looked at how people were able to maintain control of their lives in changing circumstances.

Crisis means "disturbance of habit". This rupture of the old ways heightens attentional capacities and the search for effective responses, perhaps leading to a revision of those intellectual methods of control that give organisation to life experience. Adaptations to the new situation and its demands represent efforts to restore control over one's life or destiny, but under terms of the new situation. (Elder 1978; S18)

Thomas believed that changes and adaptations could only be

studied adequately if people and groups were analysed longitudinally since behaviour in any new situation cannot be understood without reference to old ideas and customs for it is through this culture that experience and events are perceived and interpreted.

Elder took up this line of thinking and in particular one question which it suggested - under what conditions do values conveyed by historical circumstance and family during childhood persist into the adult years? - in his work 'Children of the Great Depression'. In this study Elder applied Thomas' concepts to a longitudinal study of families and children in the Great Depression, in which he wanted to assess how and why economic loss influenced life patterns by using an intracohort approach.

All of the children were born in the early 1920s, grew up in the city of Oakland, California, and were followed into the middle years of life through a series of contacts in which interview and personality data were collected. The study's point of departure is the fact of differential economic loss among families. Variations in family exposure to the economic collapse were measured by relative income loss (1929-33), and all families were assigned to one of two categories, relatively nondeprived --- and deprived. (Elder 1978: S20)

So family adaptations and conditions were taken as indicating linkages between economic deprivation and life experience. Elder then tested three general types of linkage. The first he calls 'change in the division of labour' which refers to the fact that when there is a sudden loss of income new forms of economic

maintenance come into being which may well alter the domestic and economic roles of family members, moving responsibilities from the father to the mother and older children. The second, he calls 'change in family relationships' which describes the situation resulting from the fact that with a father's loss of earnings and the adaptations just mentioned his power in the household relative to that of the mother may well be diminished, as will his control over his children, and his attractiveness as a role model. Thirdly, Elder turns his attention to 'social strains in the family' that is, social ambiguity, conflicts, and emotional strain which results from the loss of family resources together with the consequent alteration of parental roles and the inconsistent status of all family members.

Two findings among the many which Elder illustrates are particularly relevant to this thesis and it is upon these that I will focus. In all classes mothers gained prominence during the Depression. Their sphere of activity and influence increased greatly and they were most likely to be seen as the dominant parent in marital affairs and in parent-child relations by children from deprived homes. As fathers were forced to relinquish their role as breadwinners mother often entered the labour force which increased her perceived influence on family matters. Both sons and daughters viewed their mothers as the most important source of counsel and emotional support. Elder found that this situation placed daughters more completely under the control of their mothers while in the case of sons parental control of any kind was generally weakened.

Family deprivation meant that households moved towards a more labour-intensive economy which had clear domestic consequences for the upbringing of girls. Girls from deprived homes in the middle and working-classes were more often involved in household responsibilities than girls from non-deprived homes and this experience certainly accounted largely for their strong familistic orientations in adolescence and middle-age.

A quarter of a century after the Depression, women with deprived origins in the 1930s, whether middle or working class, were most inclined to prefer the family over work, leisure, and community activity; to regard children as the most important aspect of marriage; and to find satisfaction in homemaking tasks. These values are related to involvement in household operations during the 1930s and to the prominence of the mother. Neither differences in education nor variations on achieved status through marriage altered the familistic influence of childhood experience in an economically deprived household. (Elder 1978: 37)

We will see that such phenomena may well be more widespread than Elder suggests.



## ETHNOGRAPHY

### INTRODUCTION

Because this ethnographic complement to the foregoing theoretical chapters was collected in the form of oral history it is presented here in a very detailed and personal style to preserve its flavour and uniqueness. Also, I feel it is important to present it in this form to highlight the problem which sociology faces when moving between different levels of analysis, and between the relevance structures of observer and observed.

I have chosen to use the word 'generation' to describe the groups of women I will present and analyse, particularly since the majority of the women appear as individuals and as part of a family. Each of the generational terms - great grandmother, grandmother, mother, daughter - refers to an individual's position in their family but it also has relevance in a wider historical sense because each generational level refers to individuals within it who are approximately the same age, who grew up at roughly the same time, in the same community, the same class, and similar families.

The definition of 'generation' in the context of my study is as follows. Among the women alive in 1980-1, new or different generations occur approximately every twenty years, that is, the socially accepted time-span within which one generation of women reproduces the next generation. Hence, what we have represented here are women in their nineties/eighties, sixties/fifties, forties/thirties, twenties/teens. The oldest generation is referred to as the 'first generation' and so on, to the youngest generation, referred to as the 'fourth'.

To make identification of individuals with their generations easier, and since all the names appearing here are fictitious, those in the first generation have been 'christened' with surnames beginning with the letter 'A', those in the second generation with the letter 'B', those in the third with the letter 'C', and those in the fourth with 'D'. It will be evident that in two of the families the eldest females in each generation have the same Christian names - Cissie and Kate. This family tradition, which in both cases was preserved until the most recent generation, has been maintained in the fictitious naming.

It should be borne in mind that although this study is longitudinal in the sense that it covers distinct periods of women's lives over a century, involved individuals looking back over their past to their present, and was multi-generational in character, it was a 'snapshot' of oral history in the sense that the material obtained was what various women thought or remembered of their lives on a particular day in 1980-1.

First of all I will relate the story of one multi-generational family before moving on to the life stories of women from each of the generations signified by the members of this first family. The women have been chosen to act as 'representatives' of their age group, of their times, of their families.

## A note on reading the rest of the thesis

It might be useful at this point in the thesis to remind the reader of points made earlier so as to indicate how to read the following ethnographic section which is long and detailed. It does not neatly fit with the foregoing theoretical discussion although they are meant to complement each other and certain links are immediately obvious. The preamble about the nature of social time was meant to give an extensive overview of the topic showing what other authors had made of it. It was never intended that my own empirical material should refer to specific examples of everything covered by other writings on time.

I hope to have presented the ethnography in such a way that a variety of reading strategies may be adopted. However, I think I should point out that what was suggested by the women's related testimonies and what has therefore been preserved and represented in the presentation of them is the fact that generational time, where one stands in the family chain, appeared to be the most important time for the structuring of individual, family and community life. The first part of the ethnography, Chapter Five, which tells the story of the one four generational family already mentioned is meant to highlight this. What we are aware of as we read through this female family history is that the women's reflections on their past, present and future condition arise not from what we might call 'historical time'(in its community, societal or global sense) but from the time of their most immediate environment or context - the family with all its



demands, problems and pleasures. We might summarise this another way by saying that personal historical time took precedence over impersonal historical time.

Various strategies and methods for writing up the life stories were experimented with until I finally decided on the one which it seemed to me would offer the reader the best chance of following and enjoying this very full narrative style.

At one stage I did write two historical chapters with reference both to events and changes in Falkirk and to wider events and changes. However, these pieces did not seem to add a great deal to the stories of the subjects in hand and were later deleted. As a way of providing some sort of background and placement of individuals I chose to represent impersonal historical time in the form of sweeping headlines at the beginning of each generation, the kind of headlines that would have been making the news when the women under consideration were born and during their formative years. These minimal references, equivalent to mentions of these or similar events by respondents, are to be contrasted with the very detailed accounts of personal and family events and happenings in 'everyday' life which follow, in order to highlight the unfolding of personal lives in time.

Unlike the stories of the women in the first family, the stories of the rest of the women are not told straight through from beginning to end as would be the case if I were to present, say, Grace Anderson's life from when she was born until she was

ninety-three. Of course, the whole life course of an individual is covered but the pattern it follows is that in the respective generations all the women's childhoods are described side-by-side, then all their adolescences, etc. This grouping is meant to give a full and clear picture of what the different phases of the life course were like at different times this century.

After this narrative journey, in Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Nine, taking us from the end of last century to the present day, points which are evidently more directly related to the first theoretical piece are taken up again and elaborated on in Chapter Ten so as to lead the reader on to Chapter Eleven which is concerned with the conclusions about working-class existence which can be drawn from this focus on women's memories, attitudes and on-going lives.

## RESPONDENTS' LIFETIME YEARS

	Born	Age 5	Age 14	Married
<b>First Generation</b>				
Grace Anderson	1887	1892	1901	1906
Mary Arnott	1894	1899	1908	1920
Edith Archer	1894	1899	1908	1922
Connie Armstrong	1896	1901	1910	1914
Amy Aitken	1898	1903	1912	1921
Nellie Allan	1900	1905	1914	1920
Maisie Agnew	1904	1909	1918	1924
<b>Second Generation</b>				
Bella Bolton	1911	1916	1925	1935
Cissie Bell	1914	1919	1928	1931
Norah Briggs	1914	1919	1928	1932
Janie Black	1915	1920	1929	1935
Kate Brodie	1917	1922	1931	1935
Lucy Bremner	1924	1929	1938	1949
<b>Third Generation</b>				
Alice Clark	1933	1938	1947	1954
Joan Christie	1934	1939	1948	1956
Liz Chalmers	1935	1940	1949	1953
Kate Cowan	1935	1940	1949	1953
Cissie Campbell	1938	1943	1952	1957
<b>Fourth Generation</b>				
Wendy Drake	1956	1961	1970	1975
Michelle Drysdale	1957	1962	1971	1977
Carole Dillon	1959	1964	1973	1979
Cissie Davidson	1960	1965	1974	1978
Sue Day	1960	1965	1974	1976
Kate Dickson	1960	1965	1974	1977
Donna Dunn	1960	1965	1974	1977

## MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAMILIES

I	II	III	IV
Grace Anderson	Bella Bolton		Donna Dunn
Connie Armstrong	Norah Briggs	Alice Clark	Carole Dillon
	Cissie Bell	Cissie Campbell	Cissie Davidson
	Janie Black	Liz Chalmers	Wendy Drake
	Kate Brodie	Kate Cowan	Kate Dixon
		Joan Christie	Michelle Drysdale



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 'ALL IN OOR STRIDE'

#### Introduction

When Jenny Dillon was born at 11 o' clock on the morning of November 20th 1979 she became the first daughter of Mrs. Carole Dillon, the first granddaughter of Mrs. Alice Clark, the first great granddaughter of Mrs. Norah Briggs and the first great, great granddaughter of Mrs. Connie Armstrong. She became the fifth member of an intact female lineage stretching back to 1896 and the latest inheritor of a collective female memory stretching back far beyond that into the early 19th century. At the same time it must not be forgotten that Jenny was also heiress to the male members of this family, both living - her father and great grandfather - and dead.

#### Connie Armstrong

Jenny's great, great grandmother, Mrs. Connie Armstrong, was born in Falkirk on May 29th 1896. She was eighty-four when I chatted to her in the neat, cheery living room of the council house in Grahamston which had been her home for fifty-five years

and from whence she had observed and absorbed changes - great and small, good and bad - in her family, in her community, in Scotland, in Britain, and in the world. Hard work, eight children, several <sup>family</sup> deaths, the Depression, and two World Wars had obviously exacted their toll but the manner, appearance and attitudes of this lively lady belied the expected severity of the consequences of such facts and certainly belied any conclusions that may have been forthcoming from a knowledge of chronological age alone. On any account Connie was an incredibly active person both inside and outside her extended family. She visited her numerous relatives and friends regularly and had them visit her, cared for a son who had recently returned 'home' after the breakdown of his marriage, baked for her eldest daughter's bowling club, sang in a choir which provided a social service to the aged(!), sick and disabled, and played bingo twice a week. And to top all that she had, shortly before my visit, fought off a young male attacker who had attempted to snatch her handbag and what's more her bingo winnings with a hefty blow to the parts ladies small in stature find easy to reach!

Connie's own mother had died at the age of eighty-seven, bringing to an end a hard and difficult but happy and fulfilled life during which she had raised fifteen children nine boys and six girls, fourteen of her own plus a boy, Colin, whom she had adopted as a baby, for besides bearing her own children she had brought many more into the world in her capacity as a midwife in the community.

Colin, she adopted Colin. She was that sorry for him. She was a nurse, y' see. M' mother was a certificated midwife and she heard about the baby when she was oot nursing somebody ... 'n' she was that sorry f' this child gettin' passed f' one hoose t' another, y' know. So she took Colin when he was three months old.

Connie's father, a moulder in an iron foundry by trade, drank heavily and kept most, if not all, of his weekly wages so her mother's occupation had been vital to survival.

Oh, it was hard then. Things was ... m' mother went oot 'n' worked, y' know, at the nursing. M' father didn't give her too much, y' know. That's why things werena very good. He kept more t' hisel' than he give m' mum.

The quite desperate struggle against the odds was, in this case, successful. The family was happy and safe in their mother's strength and just to prove how very well they had managed Connie made much of the fact that, like herself, her mother had never had to resort to going to the pawn shop.

We were quite happy wi' m' mother 'n' that, the crowd o' us. It was her that went oot 'n' nursed, y' know, t' keep things going ... she never needed t' go t' the pawn shop, she always managed but m' dad would pawn his own stuff, y' know, t' get some beer ... Oh, long ago, as I say, it was terrible wi' the man 'n' that ... it was the olden days.

Connie, her parents' seventh child but first girl, remembered having a 'good' childhood, meaning that she had enough to eat and felt secure in the love of her parents, but also

recalled having to work very hard in the house. However, the thing which had stuck most vividly in her mind from this time was her mother 'being very strict', especially when it came to 'telling the truth at all times' which she illustrated in her story about a dress she was to get for a kinderschool concert.

She had a hard life m' mother, very hard ... 'n' I remember we were t' get this cloth t' make my dress f' the concert 'n' it was only costing sixpence but I couldn't have it when we saw it, I had t' wait till Friday. In the meantime my friend Jenny and her friend got their dresses so I was quite annoyed and jealous so I said, 'Oh, mine's is white with a red dot' because that was what the material was like which would eventually become my dress. But even wee 'white' lies weren't allowed 'n' when m' mother found out from Jenny's mother and other neighbours at the washing that I'd said I'd got m' dress when I'd no such thing she refused t' make it. That was t' be my punishment f' lying, even after my primary teacher tried t' persuade her. "No", she says, "f' tellin' a lie. She's no allowed t' tell a lie".

Although the story did eventually end happily with Connie getting her red-spotted outfit and a 'penny poppy' a salutary lesson had been learnt at a very early age and was to be taught and learnt again and again until it was second nature to Connie not to lie in any way and to know the difference between 'right' and 'wrong'. Two other points are worth noting here about the above anecdote - first, the way Connie's mother found out about her indiscretion through the communal grapevine 'at the washing', and secondly, how despite her incredible work load both inside and outside the home Connie's mother still found time, had to find time, to sew for her family, 'she was an awf' sewer, made



everything, trousers 'n' everything'. However, to return to the earlier point, strict moral teaching in the home was reinforced by religious strictures adhered to by the children and their mother. They all attended the Grahamston Evangelical Mission in the Miller Hall, together with their Aunt Peggy.

... always we went t' the Mission but m' father didna, except very occasionally f' a sing ... we were at the meeting three times on a Sunday, 11 o' clock, half past two and half past six. Mother made us but, of course, y' had a carry on and had some boyfriends there as well as girlfriends.

It is probably worth stressing that as this last comment indicates church, chapel or the Mission in these days was not totally dry or boring to youngsters for although, to a certain extent they were preached at they also managed to have an enormous amount of fun among themselves and treated the Miller Hall or wherever like some kind of youth club. It was a permitted meeting place other than the home or the street and one where children were allowed to go by themselves because parents often only went to one of the three Sunday meetings, usually morning or evening, while their kids went to them all. In this sense going to church was not a major imposition but came to be viewed, particularly by girls, as a desirable freedom and many who were not'made to go' went of their own accord for this very reason it seems.

Connie's childhood wasn't easy, and yet in many ways it was fascinating, even liberal one might say, because stemming from

her status as eldest daughter she was not only the one who obviously helped her mother in the house but who also helped her in her job.

I've seen me going down when she was awf' late coming back, seein' how she was gettin' on 'n' I'd go in 'n' the lady doctor'd say, "Oh, here's Connie, she'll help us". So she'd ask me when they'd got a difficult case f' the forceps 'n' everything 'n' I would hand her the right ones. She'd say t' m' mother "Did you help her?" M' mother says, "No, you asked her f' that 'n' she got it f' y'". I'd get the hot water and put the instruments in, things like that. The doctor told me I should o' been a nurse too.

However, that wasn't to be and when Connie left school in 1910, at the age of fourteen, she went to work in a laundry where she earned four shilling a week. She gave these wages to her mother who gave her back threepence spending money which mainly paid for collections at the Mission.

'N' Friday - I come home at one o' clock on a Friday - 'n', of course, y' had t' work. It was just a room 'n' kitchen then 'n' y' had t' do the room on a Friday afternoon. But before that wi' that four shilling I went up t' Elliott's 'n' y've no idea what I got f' that four shilling f' m' mother - eggs, bacon, sugar, jam. Y've no idea! As much messages f' that four shilling 'n' that was f' everything till m' dad 'n' them come back cos I was home before them.

When Connie worked at the laundry she used to go home at dinner time for her lunch and also earn herself a little extra pocket money which she used to buy sweets.

When I worked in the laundry I used t' come home at dinner time f' m' lunch 'n' mum'd be oot working 'n' that. I used t' wash the dishes at dinner time 'n' there was a white sink that I had t' scrub. That was m' job every day when I came back at dinner time, wash the dishes 'n' scrub the sink, 'n' mother gave me a halfpenny.

During her teenage years and while working in the laundry Connie had always to be in at nine o' clock even though her mother knew her boyfriend well because he lived nearby and had been a life-long friend of her brother Arthur's.

Y' must be in at nine o' clock then. Y' mother'd be standin' on the corner ready f' t' ... if y' were late, y' know. I remember when I was just aboot fourteen past 'n' I was comin' up the street 'n' m' mother was comin' doon the street, ken, wi' her plaits doon her back 'n' she'd got on a wee shawl 'n' everything. "That you, Connie?" 'N' I was between twa fellas. "That you, Connie?" I thought she'd probably never o' kent me if I never said a word 'n' I was in between twa o' them walking doon the road, but she said, "D' y' know I was in m' bed 'n' I had t' get oot?!" It was after nine, y, see, aboot half past nine. "D' y' know I was in m' bed 'n' I had t' get oot?!" she kept saying. I was the first girl, y' see.

Such rules together with working in the laundry only came to an end when, at just turned eighteen, Connie married Robbie in August 1914. He was twenty-five, she'd known him all her days and they'd been engaged for a year. The actual marriage ceremony took place in the manse of the church because Pastor Miller was not allowed to marry people at this point in history although he was granted permission some years later. Connie and Robbie's first child, Norah, was born shortly after their wedding, when Connie was, as she carefully described herself, eighteen and a



half, in September 1914.

The family was at this time reasonably well-off because when they married Robbie, who was a fanatical saver it seems, had a bank book containing one hundred pounds besides having numerous sovereigns and half sovereigns in his possession. This paved the way to them having a nice house, although they didn't own it, and nice furniture.

I didn't live wi' m' mother when I got married. I got a house o' m' own then. Oh yes. I mind Robbie's mother coming up 'n' sayin', "Think y' were the Queen!" There was lace curtains then, at the window and on the bed. "Think y' were the Queen!" she says. I was fortunate. This house I had had a back door 'n' a front door, and a hall. Beautiful! Nice house I had. I was very fortunate. I had furniture. Oh ay. Well, Robbie had a bank book. Oh, right enough I was fortunate, y' know. Over a hundred pound. Well, that was good in those days. That was a lot in those days. I had linoleum, there was no such thing as carpet in those days, 'n' then a sideboard 'n' y' had y' table 'n' chairs. 'N' in the room there was a suite 'n' a table, a gate-legged table. As his mother said, she said I was a 'queen'.

Connie didn't work when first married presumably because she started her family almost immediately, Robbie had a nest-egg and he was in more or less regular employment earning a decent wage. However, her own explanation for staying at home was in terms of the old adage that "there was no such thing in they days; going oot working ..." which was an interesting comment in view of her mother's unremitting outside toil. In actual fact one of the main reasons for Connie not considering outside work was precisely so that her mother could continue in employment as a



midwife. Connie's involvement in the running of her family of origin continued after her own marriage and despite the fact that she had left the house.

I didna go oot working then, y' see. It's just that I went roond 'n' helped m' mother with her going oot nursing. I've seen her no bein' in and I've had t' go down 'n' maybe make m' dad's tea there 'n' no gettin' back in time for oor own. But Robbie was awful good. He didna mind. He watched the children. I've seen maybe ... I would go doon t' the bottom o' the street 'n' I would say, "M' mother's no back yet, she's oot at a case but there's soup on". "Dunna worry. I'll look after the children", he says. Oh ay, he helped. He was a great help. He was good that way. I'll tell y', when it was a holiday he'd say, "You put the carpets oot, Con, 'n' away y' go doon t' y' mother's. Take the bairns wi' y'. See if she's needin' anything". Oh, 'n' he'd thingmy 'n' rub the grate. As long as nobody seen him. That was his way. This was when he was on holiday or strike ...

Connie's marriage and Norah's birth took place just before the outbreak of the First World war, a major historical event which Connie didn't expand on very much, most likely because although her brother Arthur was killed in action, the War had been less disruptive to her family than it might have been since neither her father nor her husband went away to fight. Connie's father was too old to be in active service but was sent to Stonehaven and Dundee 'to watch the bridges' which although probably important was not dangerous and was treated more like a holiday than anything else.

They sent him just to watch the bridges'n' that. I think that was f' the old people. I remember Norah was only about two or three at the time and m'

mother went up there f' six weeks beside m' father and took oor Norah wi' her. She was the first grandchild, y' see.

Robbie did enlist for the war but while he was at a camp somewhere waiting for his orders to go to Europe he was recalled to the foundry.

He was ... I'll tell y' ... he was set to go away but the Falkirk Foundry where he worked sent for him f' the ammunitions, y' know, the munitions 'n' he got sent home. Captain Canade sent f' him so he didna get ... Maybe he'd o' liked t' o' went t' the War, I suppose, y' know what they're like. And then he joined up in 1939 too, t' see if it was any better.

When I first asked Connie if she could remember anything of the First World War she had simply replied, "Well I was married then".

Connie had given birth to eight children, one had died as a baby but the other seven all survived, with her last one, Maggie, being born in 1932 when Connie was thirty-six and by which time her first child, Norah, was 18 and married. And, in fact, Connie became a grandmother for the first time just after the birth of her last child, when Norah gave birth to her first child, Alice, in August 1933.

I had Norah 'n' Johnny 'n' Brenda 'n' then there was Ian. There's aboot seven years between them, between they two. The second family! Whenever anybody come t' the door they'd say they wanted either "the first family" or "the second family".

They first three thought they were a different family right enough because there was such a big gap between them, y' know what I mean? But there were Ian, Roddy, Bob and Maggie. That was they four. Two different families. It was nice though and we managed.

The most significant event to have happened in Connie's life appeared to have been Robbie taking ill when he was fifty-four and she was forty-seven for this was to drastically change the lives they had led up until 1943, primarily because it forced a reversal in their roles. Robbie had to have one of his legs off owing to some kind of poisoning which set-in after an accident whereupon he become an invalid for the remaining eighteen years of his life. He was unable to work and also needed almost constant nursing. It was when this happened to Robbie that Connie had to take up full-time employment. First of all she worked in the Admiralty, issuing stores and equipment to the Navy, and then she went as a cleaner to British Aluminium, where she stayed for sixteen years until she retired at the age of sixty-three. At British Aluminium she worked on a rota of three shifts - night shift, 6 to 2, and 2 to 10. Neither working nor the shifts bothered her, she got used to it,

But it upset Mr. Armstrong, me going out working. He thought it was terrible, him no able and me t' go out in the morning t' work. We were better doing that as taking off ... when he started, at first when he was ill, he had only 11/6 off the insurance. Well, that wouldna do, that didna do ... That's all he had off the insurance, was 11/6. Roddy and Maggie were still at home.

Although she never complained, times weren't easy for Connie

for despite help from her daughters she did a huge amount in terms of nursing her husband.

When I come home from night shift I've seen me no gettin' in m' bed because he hadna been very well, y' know, it had been a bad night.

However, things were made much easier when Maggie left school, four years into her father's illness, and instead of getting a job stayed home to look after him while her mother continued working to keep them all. The family thought this was a fine arrangement, especially economically speaking, but others didn't agree.

The doctor fetched me over, he says, "She's far too young t' be gi'in the bed-pan 'n' everything". But it was just ... I was working, y' see. I was gettin' a good wage 'n' he says, "She'll have t' go out 'n' work, she's too young f' that". But she was quite well int' doing it for her dad.

Connie probably had thought nothing of it since she had been ministering to patients who were more or less strangers at a much younger age when she helped her mother out. It is not clear whether it was as a result of the doctor's worries and advice, but soon after this Maggie did get a job as a nanny in America, where she's been ever since after marrying an American and settling down there.

Connie had been over to the States three times since her sixties - the first time for Maggie's wedding, the second time to



pull herself together a little after Robbie's death in 1961, and the third time to look after Maggie when she was seriously ill for sixteen weeks. Maggie was always encouraging her mother to go back but although Connie readily admitted that she would quite like to see her daughter and her two grandchildren she was not over-impressed with America because she couldn't find any bingo there. Anyway, her greatest ambition in life was to visit her son, Ian, in New Zealand where he'd lived for thirty-one years after going there in 1949 to get work as a welder. He now has a good job in an office, has been married twice and has five children. Connie's other five children were still living close-by, four in Falkirk and one in Grangemouth. Near and far had, in fact, been reunited only four years earlier at Connie's eightieth birthday party which should have been a big occasion, a great coming together, but which in reality had been a big occasion for the wrong reasons. What should have been a celebration turned out to be an upsetting and disastrous event which Connie for obvious reasons did not want to talk about in any detail.

To conclude, Connie said that she noticed 'things in general' changing about twenty or thirty years ago and for her the most prominent of changes had been in the bringing up of children,

... everybody's children was very obedient. Y' can see the difference now 'n' y've just got to accept it, that's what I say. I've a son who's very strict. I tellt him, "It's a different generation now, y'll have t' go with it". So it is, it's a different generation altogether.

We'll now move on to look at these subsequent generations beginning with Connie's eldest daughter, Norah.

### Norah Briggs

As we have just learnt, Norah Briggs (nee Armstrong) was born in Graham's Road, Falkirk in September 1914, a month after the marriage of her parents and just after the outbreak of the First World War, the eldest child of a family of eight. On first impressions it was not immediately evident that Norah was Connie's daughter because she was an altogether more restrained, more reserved person; a good deal more nervous than her rather jovial mother, I thought. However, this tension soon evaporated to reveal one of those absolutely charming people who exude an aura of calmness around them. Like her mother Norah lived in a very bright, clean and orderly council house which had just been renovated by the council. This improvement work had delayed my interview with Norah for months since she refused to be visited by me in the temporary accommodation she had to live in while the modernisation was underway. Her pride in her own house was too strong to allow that.

Norah's story not only follows on from Connie's but complements it, adding much detail to her mother's sometimes vague recollections of her own and her family's life.

To begin with Norah described her childhood as having been spent in 'just an ordinary family' where' money was tight but we seemed to get on better than some. We never went without much'. However, she soon went on to point out that in some ways her younger days had been slightly unusual because she had in fact spent such a lot of time in her formative years with an aunt; something which her mother had never alluded to but which was very significant.

Strangely enough a lot of time I spent with an aunt. I was the oldest but at weekends I stayed with this aunt. It was m' mother's aunt really, m' grandmother's sister, y' see. M' grandmother used t' say I liked it at my aunt's because she spoiled me. She did spoil me. There wasna s' much time t' spoil y' when there was seven or eight o' y's. I suppose I would lap that bit up. The people where m' mum lived never knew me the same as the rest o' the family because I was always wi' this aunt. Everybody says that I'm different f' the other ones.

The aunt mentioned here is Aunt Peggy, whom Connie had previously referred to in passing in connection with the Miller Hall Mission. Aunt Peggy was a First World War widow, her husband having taken ill and died while on active service in France. During the course of her life, besides caring for Norah a good deal of the time, she formally adopted two of her other nieces who were both from very large families and one of which Norah still visits every week.

She brought up those two girls and a good bit of me too.

It seems that Aunt Peggy was particularly influential because of her involvement with the religious side of life. Norah's first description of her was that she was 'an awf' good liver, a great Christian'. She and her aunt attended the Grahamston Evangelical Mission at the Miller Hall.

Every week we were there. I was there three times on a Sunday and I was at the Wednesday night meeting, Christian Endeavour on a Wednesday, and the Saturday night meeting. I was in the choir 'n' everything. That was my life.

Norah did point out that her mother also went to the Mission, when she as able to, meaning when she wasn't too busy at home, and that her father had been very involved, even preaching at one stage, 'but after we lost the wee boy he lost his faith and just slipped away from it all'. All her brothers and sisters went to the Mission Sunday School as children but failed to keep up their attendance once they got older. However, because she stayed with her aunt at weekends she continued going regularly and eventually became a Sunday School teacher.

I was pretty good living when I was young, not that I've ever done anything bad in m' life, but the way I was brought up wi' s' much of m' life being spent wi' m' aunt who was such a good Christian and nothing was ever done wrong. I think my Aunt Peggy had an awful lot o' influence in my life, she really did. And all they kind o' main things I got from her. She was ninety when she died.

By 'kind o' main things' Norah does not mean practical skills or



such like but rather a design for living, a moral code, the ingredients of a 'good life'. Norah particularly liked her aunt because she was a person one could confide in with the full knowledge that what was said would go no further. She said that she could tell her aunt things which she couldn't even tell her mother and this was important because in a big family it seems that it was virtually impossible to divulge thoughts or feelings without everyone getting to know about it. If one was part of a large family confidences within that family group were dangerous things.

Aunt Peggy had a confectionary shop in Graham's Road and used to make her own sweets or 'chugs' as they were known. Norah helped her when she was there.

I'd make the toffee and roll it out. Y' used t' roll it and take the scissors 'n' keep twistin' it when y' were cuttin' it so they would come out wi' two or three ends, y' know, like stars. 'N' y' had a hook 'n' y' took the toffee 'n' y' stretched it 'n' it turned white, kind o' yellow 'n' white. I used t' do all that. Oh ay, 'n' all the different kinds o' tablet.

At one stage Aunt Peggy went out to Australia and Norah, having received permission from her mother, was set to join her but Peggy returned after two years having decided that life over there wasn't for her. Norah still sometimes wonders what her life would have been like had this worked out, saying, "I would o' went anywhere wi' m' aunt. She was a wonderful person."

Despite weekends at the sweet shop and despite the important moral and religious influences of her aunt, Norah did spend a lot of time in her own home with her mother and father and her brothers and sisters, all of whom she was very close to, particularly her father.

I was very close t' m' dad, more so than t' m' mum. I'm closer t' m' mum now. I don't know, with m' dad it was just something we had f' one another 'n' yet we couldna show it. There was no fuss. It was just there. Without being fussy 'n' without being all over one another there was a great closeness there ... I mind m' sister in America once saying t' me, she says, "You've always thought more o' m' dad than m' mum". So it must o' showed without me meaning t' let it happen. I think m' mum and I were, as I've said, closer in later years.

From a relatively young age Norah's help in her mother's house was indispensable not just to her mother but, as we are already aware, to her grandmother.

Well I believe I did a lot o' the cooking at m' mum's, y' know, cos it was good meals we had. Well, it was just plain cooking in these days. I could o' kept house wi' the best o' them. When m' mother was ill or having the children I could keep things going ... Again m' mother used t' go a lot ... she would help m' gran out y' see. M' grandmother had one or two sons that hadna got married, y' know, and there was always plenty t' do down there 'n' she was a good help t' m' grandmother.

Norah was helped by her sisters, although being the eldest she had the prime responsibility. Her brothers never helped as far as she can remember but her father did.

Just the girls helped in the house. I can't remember the boys helped much but m' father was good in the house. Ay, I often tell them about their grandad. One thing, he was a great man f' makin' what they call pease brose. And he always asked us if there were a lot of us in at night.

Norah never mentioned her time at school, probably because it was not an important part of her life. By necessity her attentions were always focussed on home life rather than school and she knew all along that being the eldest of a big family she would have to finish her education at fourteen and go straight to work. She had no choice about leaving school, about starting work, or even about her actual job it seems. On leaving school, in 1928, she started work immediately at the Falkirk Iron Foundry, in the Belling Black shop. She recalled sadly,

I got the chance o' a job at Holme Stewart's. It was a fashion shop in Falkirk but it's away now. It was a good shop. So, it was either there f' 7/6 a week or go t' the Works. M' mother always said I had a choice but the job in the Works was 13s a week. So what choice had I? I was the oldest of the family. I had no choice. She likes y' t' think y' had a choice 'n' I'd chose this 'n' that was it.

Most of Norah's wages from the foundry went directly into the common family purse just as her mother's wages from the laundry had done when she'd been that age.

I never had much pocket money or anything, oh no. Y' used t' ... I always took it home, anything I had ... m' mother used t' say that ... m' other sister, Brenda, if she was needin' nylons or anything she bought them before she went home with

her pay but I would never break int' m' pay. I used t' give it t' m' mother 'n' she would give me pocket money. Two shilling or something it would be and it was only f' the collections really, that's all I had t' spend it on, 'n' in these days y' were only puttin' a penny or tuppence in the plate at the Mission. I would usually have something left 'n' on a Thursday I've seen me saying t' m' mum, "There's a shilling f' the gas" or something like that, y' know. These days y' just got y' wages on a Friday and mum used t' always say that - what I had left tided her over till she got paid on Friday by m' dad or m' brothers.

Even once Norah started formal employment her duties at home remained in force and both her mother and her grandmother still relied heavily upon her contribution. She came home from the foundry and 'mucked in'.

Y' had to cos m' mum still went t' m' grandma's a lot t' help her. We'd come in 'n' there were things to be done and y' just done them. These days y' had y' certain jobs t' do. Thursdays I always did quite a bit 'n' I worked on Saturday morning but I'd come home 'n' do the windows, windowsills and the steps.

Norah remembers her gran who was still practising midwifery when she worked at the foundry and whom she indirectly helped so much.

Oh yes, I remember her fondly. She was a lovely person. She had fifteen o' a family 'n' she never had ... she had a room and kitchen with a small room off. I don't know where they all went. 'N' it was one of those houses where anybody could go in 'n' y' got a cup o' tea 'n' there was always plenty of everything. She baked a lot, always making pancakes. M' mother's just the same, she's anybody's friend. M' gran lived in Grahamston too. First of all she lived down the stair from us and



then when we flitted to Wallace Street she only lived five minutes away.

During her teenage years Norah spent most of the spare time she had left after working in the foundry, working in the house and going to the Mission, with one of her cousins, "she was m' cousin but she was m' best chum 'n' we were awf' close". They had one or two boyfriends but Norah met the 'love of her life' actually at her work. She worked beside him in the paint and spraying shop and his father was her foreman there.

It was a family affair in the Belling Black shop. M' husband was supervisor there till he retired, his father had been the foreman and his grandfather before him. It was an accumulation of one hundred and fifty years years between them, with my husband being there fifty-one years. The last of the Briggs's. It was too much like hard work f' my son to consider. M' husband wouldn't have stayed but he wouldn't leave his dad. He was his right-hand man. His father was a great man. What a nature! M' husband's great but he'll never be like his dad. A lovely man! --- So, m' husband was in the same place. They used t' say it's no too good working in the same place as y' boyfriend but however it turned out all right. They used t' kid me about the gaffer's son, y' know.

'It turned out all right' and Norah and Donald married when they were both eighteen, in 1932.

M' grandma, m' mum 'n' m'sel' were all married at eighteen; well, m' grandma at seventeen. I don't know it done us any harm really. In these days y' werena missing an awful lot but nowadays they don't want tied down s' quick because there's s' much going on. Just a different way o' life now. My family were all over twenty-one when they married.

Norah and Donald were married in the manse of the Baptist Church, "it wasna a big wedding". Donald was a practising Baptist and much as Norah had devoted her life up to this point to the Mission she likewise became a Baptist on marriage without so much as a second thought.

Of course, m' husband was Baptist Church so I went t' Church after that. I preferred the Mission, I liked the Mission life. But y' went wi' y' husband then.

After their marriage Norah and Donald lived with his parents. They went there because Donald was from a small family, having only one brother and sister. They stayed there for over three years until their second child, Jessie, was born in 1935, when they acquired a rented house of their own. However, Norah had not seen living with her in-laws as a great drawback. In fact, she rather enjoyed living there.

They were great in-laws. They were the greatest.  
Y' know how some folks talk about their in-laws!

Norah's first baby had been born in August 1933. It was a difficult time because Norah was very ill and almost died from kidney failure which had sent her blind for three days. She realised a few days before the birth that something might not be quite right but did not do much about it because, for one thing, it just was not the done thing to go running to doctors or hospitals and, for another, she had made arrangements for her

grandmother to deliver her first great grandchild; something she desperately wanted to do.

Yes, she brought hundreds into the world, including her first great grandchildren. She brought all m' mother's children int' the world, all eight of us, and her other daughter's children. And the only problem she ever had was my Alice. It wasn't her fault though and I had her deliver my next baby so that she'd know I didn't think it was --- She must've been coming on then but she was good everybody liked her f' she was good at it. Far 'n' near sent f' her.

Throughout the three days of being ill with her first child Norah was in a semi-conscious blind state in the Infirmary and was giving up on pulling through because at one stage she had taken fifteen fits in an hour. Despite this, however, she said it had been more frightening for people like her mother and her husband who were more fully aware of what was happening.

I had another three children after that with no problems. It didn't deter me any.

Owing to the above experience Norah was ambivalent about home births. She thought it was a good idea when mothers had other children in the house so that they "could keep an eye on what was going on" but she realised in cases such as Alice's it would be better to be in the hospital from the word go. However, the particular advantage of home confinements was their relaxed atmosphere which she thought, although she never gave birth in a hospital, made the whole event less frightening. Whomever one

wanted to attend the birth could be present and Norah remembered how exciting this was when her sister was there at the birth of her fourth child but first son, "she was over the moon; thought it was great". Her mother-in-law was present at the birth of her third child, Alma, and although she was over fifty it was the first time she had witnessed a birth, apart from those of her own children, of course. Despite the common occurrence of adult female relatives being involved in a baby's birth children were never present it seems, except for very unusual instances like Connie helping her mother, and neither were men. Norah had never seen any of her brothers and sisters being born and remarked further,

There was no such thing as y' husband gettin' in on the birth or anything. Not in our time. Never heard of that, no. But now. At first I thought, "Oh dear!" but now I think it's quite good. They know what y're going through sort o' style and I think that's good f' them.

Norah obviously knew a lot about caring for babies and children from her experience gained by looking after her own siblings but if she wanted specific advice she would go to her grandmother,

With her being what she was; I'd speak t' her about things like that. Y' werena always running t' the doctor.

However, despite receiving what appeared to be effective and useful advice from her grandmother and her mother she did think



it preferable in general to go to the doctor, "the right source" as she called it, especially now that times had changed and free health care was readily available. Mind you, as with many other things, Norah's attitudes towards the health service and doctors were very mixed because during the rest of my stay she complained repeatedly about the dreadful treatment her husband, her cousin and one of her grand-daughters had recently been subjected to by 'the right source', saying things like, "y' can't depend on y' doctor", "we've no got a great lot o' doctors the now" and "y' havena the same faith when y' hear all these things".

To return to Norah and her family. As she said earlier she had four children which she and Donald didn't actually plan and probably wouldn't have had if Donald Jnr. "had come sooner". They did plan this fourth child hoping that it might at last be the son they both wanted so much. As a general observation Norah commented,

A lot o' people who had big families didn't really want big families. It was just part o' y' life, just every two year. It was nearly that wi' m' mum, about every two year. Y' took what came 'n' that was it. That was their life then. It's a good job things have changed. It's a good thing y' can plan y' families now ... They have abortions 'n' everything now 'n' it was always a dirty word before. Y' heard of things happening, maybe someone doing the job themselves, y' know, these kind o' things went on, which was a bad thing, of course --- No that I ever resented mine because I was quite happy ... I have a nice family 'n' happy. That's the main thing.

Norah had always been totally wrapped up in her family and

still was. She put the fact that it was such a fine family down to her having such a good man.

I'm proud o' m' family. But y' see they had a great dad. Oh ay. He's got a great nature. He's awful well liked. In fact, in the work where he retired they called him "The Champ", that's his nickname, "The Champ" ... Just his life was his family. It doesna matter what y' want y' just need t' say. If y're wanting anything 'n' if it's in his power t' give it t' y', y' get it. He just goes out his way. I've never wanted f' anything ... within reason.

Besides having a 'great nature' Donald was a 'hard worker' and while in some very real senses he allowed himself to be exploited in other matters he was very enterprising in ways which tremendously benefited his wife and family, at least financially. As we know from earlier remarks Donald worked in the Belling Black shop in Falkirk Iron works for over fifty years largely for sentimental reasons of family tradition and his pay was never very great so he supplemented it.

I've never had any worries in m' married life. I've been fortunate. M' husband was never content with just one job, he always found something else so that he could give everybody that bit extra, which we've always had. In the Fire Service, during the Second World War, he had under three pounds a week but that was when he started papering and painting in his spare time. He's a hard worker. Ay, always a hard worker. Now he's working wi' the coupons. He's the main collector. So he's got that going. Well that gives us something more coming in, y' see, than we would have. It's always been that way with us. It's true, they say he worked hard f' those he loved right enough. So he did.

Norah greatly appreciated Donald's contribution to the well-being of the family but sometimes bitterly resented the fact that he had had to work so very hard to make sure they all had a decent life.

If he'd worked f' fifty-one years in some o' these other places he'd be made f' life ... He could o' been in different jobs. And I've seen me saying that cos he could o' been away, y' know, 'n' y' know what y' retire wi' in the ICI or BP. Y' get a shock when y' hear what some o' them are coming away wi' just now. But er, well, he was such a great man his dad that I mean I never grudged him stayin'. 'N' it was a good life because, er, he was always, as I told y', doin' another job.

Besides having what they considered to be a comfortable and well-off kind of life regarding home and family the Briggs' had also had that important bit extra for certain luxuries which they considered to be very important, like holidays for instance.

We've been on three cruises. I've been to Austria and I've been to Malta twice. This year we're going to Corfu. We've been going abroad f' years, and we always go f' a week t' the place we went to when the kids were young - Ayr. We always have a week in Ayr in September. We've been able to have lovely holidays. He takes care o' all that with his other jobs.

Norah was proud of her husband and proud of her children who had all done very well for themselves, gone up in the world.

I'm very proud of my family. I thought we might lose Donald (Jnr) at one stage because he was ill for three months when he was born but he's a handsome man now. He really is. Got a great job. I've never had any worry wi' him. He's in



Edinburgh, in the Region, and he's a principal now. It's certainly a good job f' him. They live well 'n' everything. It speaks f' itself. Y' like t' see them gettin' on. Got a nice detached house. He had a semi t' begin with but he's done very well f' hisel'. She's never worked since she had the children. Doing very well. 'N' it's all been done studying at home. We wanted him t' carry on at school. He was on till he was seventeen 'n' done quite well. But oh no. However, y' can't make them do the things ... He wanted t' leave. But he's done it the hard way ... Jetta lives in Carron Vale. Her husband is well-up in the ICI. He interviews people f' jobs 'n' that. And, er, of course Eddie (Alice's husband) was a teacher, and Alma's husband's the manager o' Abbeycraig. Could o' been lots o' things but he's done quite well f' hisel' there. They built their own house up Standen Brae. A beautiful house. It's split level. They've got everything in it. It's gorgeous. Alice was very clever. Eddie always used t' say that. Oh, she was clever at school. She was at the High School 'n' could o' done well. Very smart yet Alice. As regards anything at all that crops up, income tax or anything. She works things out. Eddie used t' say that, "Alice could o' went far". But she met Eddie 'n' that was that.

According to Norah she never had any major worries or troubles with her children, except for childhood ailments, even in their teenage years.

I wasna awf' strict wi' my family when they were teenagers although I liked them t' be in at a decent hour. I was a wee bit more lenient than when we were young, y' know. Never really had a lot o' trouble that way really. No, I must say, I've been lucky that way.

I responded to these rather general comments with the prompting question, "So y' never had any great arguments or anything?"

No really --- There was somebody Alice went with f' a wee while and I didn't like him at all. She was



no angel, she used t' ... 'n', er, odd times if she did go out Alice was always seen by somebody. She never got away wi' too much. Too many relations. Somebody always seen her. Y' always used t' hear something - they were supposed t' be somewhere 'n' they were somewhere else. But I was never worried. Alice had more worry that way hersel' at times wi' the girls. Well, more Carole. She was a bit harem-scarem f' a while. She used t' go out 'n' forget t' phone that she was gonna be late back 'n' things like that. Used t' get under y' skin a bit.

As we will learn later, in no uncertain terms, Norah's version of events during Alice's youth together with her claims of life at this ti me being trouble-free and under control are quite far removed from the truth. In fact, she had just as much 'trouble' with Alice as she claims Alice had with Carole. But for the moment perhaps the most important point about the story, as it stands, is how a whole communal network of neighbours and, particularly, relatives, who were also often neighbours anyway, operated to keep people in their right and proper place. It was seen as a duty to keep everyone informed and up-to-date of everyone else's movements and this is where gossip would come in to act as a moral force for approval or censure. One might choose to ignore one's parents but then there was the rest of the network to contend with. I'm getting in front of myself in the story but I must point out that when I spoke to Norah I already knew from having interviewed the rest of her family that it was her mother, Connie, who in this family usually had the controlling hand in family affairs. So I asked Norah, "Did your mother ever interfere in any way when the children were growing-up; when they were teenagers?"

No,no. I must say, never.

To which I responded, "Not at all?"

No. She was quite good, she never interfered wi' anything that we done or anything like that.

The significance of these remarks will become evident once we reach Alice's story.

Norah did feel that although she was close to her mother and her children she had been too reserved when it came to outward signs of affection and emotion, and when it came to discussions about important topics, such as sex. All along the line there had been too much restraint in her life and this was something which, on reflection, she deeply regretted even though 'everything was all right' which basically meant that none of her children 'had to get married'.

M' mother and me never spoke about personal matters. No, we was never close like that. No, no really. They (parents) were a bit like that which made me a bit like that. That's the bit I've resented often because I've no been able to sit down 'n' talk 'n' tell them things when they should o' been told things, when they were very young. I've heard them saying that theirsels, saying, "Of course, our mum never told us". What happened was they were hearing it from other ones in a different way, all the things I should have been speaking t' them about. But now it's different. I agree wi' that. It's different now how they can talk t' their folks about these things 'n' that's good. I would like t' o' been more like that but I know I wasn't. M' mum or that never showed y' their feelings the way they should've and it makes you a

wee bit like that. Makes me like that anyway. M' husband's folk again were very different. His mum and him were very close. He could o' said anything to his mother. He had a wonderful mother that way. I don't mean I hadna a good mother but there wasna that closeness in things that mattered. There wasna that closeness there should o' been which I admire in other folk and wish that I had been like that too. I quite believe in that now. I would like t' show my affections an awful lot more than I do but I've always been restrained that way and I don't think it's a good thing. I think it's good now and I just wish I hadn't been so reserved. I was just a wee bit too much like that. I think it's good now the things they can say. Just take Donald's family, the things they talk about in front o' the kids. I remember their grandad went over one night and Donald was in the bath with Vicky. Y' see they do this, they're brought up like that and think nothing of it. But I think there's a lot t' be said f' it instead of whispering 'n' frightened t' say anything 'n' they're hearing things in a different way outside ... I think in m' mother's day there was too much kept back. Course they're different days now, sex-wise even, y' know, they're that open with everything. Course the kind of opportunities y' get now without worrying about anything happening t' y'. It's a different way o' life, it really is.

I think this quite long extract from Norah is interesting for many reasons but the main thing I'd like to make clear is how this shows that people change with the times, frequently because they are not isolated within their own generation but do have frequent contact with their sons and daughters, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, etc.- who have grown-up in a different external world - so that they are constantly faced with the changes that are happening all the time in society in the form of familiar people. It is perhaps sad and unfortunate, however, that despite the thoughts and feelings of members of the older generations changing considerably this change is often not apparent to their families because in practice old ways linger,



and older people because of their up-bringing continue to be inhibited despite their inner thoughts and cannot therefore adequately express their changing viewpoints. Besides this difficulty, attitudes are mixed and confused so that what is often fully accepted in a general sense is not accepted or tolerated at a more personal level.

At first I thought people living together was terrible but now I'm beginning to accept it. I think it's becoming more accepted. But let's face it I wouldn't like mine t' have done it so that means I'm not completely for it. I can see that it can be a good thing f' someone who's no very sure about getting married. But I don't go with it that far that I would like any of mine to have been doing it.

Indeed one of Norah's main worries when I spoke to her had been caused by the fact that her grand-daughter and Alice's daughter, Carole, had been living off and on with her boyfriend which in an earlier quote Norah had termed 'harem-scarem' behaviour.

Another thing that was causing Norah a considerable amount of worry when I spoke to her had been the incidents of four years previously which had happened at the time of her mother's 80th birthday. Norah was more keen to talk about these events than her mother but exact details were very sketchy. It appears that not long before the get together for Connie's birthday Norah's youngest daughter, Alma, had felt it necessary to speak to her aunt and her mother's sister, Brenda, about something that had



been said about Norah that was 'wrong' and somehow this tale had crossed the Atlantic and reached the ears of her Aunty Maggie.

It was just through m' other sister, Brenda, cos Alma had t' speak t' Brenda about me, something she had said. She just went and spoke to her about it 'n' told her she was wrong and I don't know how the poison went but it went t' America.

The result of this was that when Maggie met Alma at Connie's birthday tea she snubbed her quite blatantly although Norah did not get <sup>to</sup> know about the incident until some days later.

I resented that, that she had done that to her cos she's that good Alma, she'll do anything f' anybody, go out her way. And she was crazy about her Aunty Maggie f' she used t' go round m' mother's a lot, Alma, and help her grandma on a Saturday. She had Maggie on a pedestal, there was nobody like her Aunty Maggie. It was just through m' sister saying something that that happened. Well that goes f' y' when y' family's ... when y' close like that anyway --- It's sad really. Y' never think these things'll happen t' your family but y' see they're so simple 'n' so easy done.

Norah spoke about the incident, apart from the exact details of what had been said, as though it were yesterday rather than four years ago. She was still deeply upset by the split in the family and had many sleepless nights worrying about it which in turn worried or annoyed her own children.

I could write a book about the lot o' them. But things like that when y're no in the habit of rowing as it were. I've seen me lying having sleepless nights, it's all come crowding int' me, y' know. I'm the world's worst worrier about anything like that. I've never had any big worries

o' my own. That's why they all resented me having that worry about m' mother's party.

One thing the argument did do was to bring Norah and her mother even closer than they had become anyway in later years, with less potential friction than there had been previously.

There used t' be alot o' friction caused just wi' remarks, y' know, against maybe something 'n' the other one would say another thing 'n' maybe without thinking m' mother'd say it back t' me where, y' see, y're no gettin' that now so that's bound t' make a difference. ... I go t' m' mother on a Wednesday 'n' she's here on a Thursday 'n' I see her on a Sunday. I go t' Church 'n' go straight t' m' mum's. Every week. Well, I feel I'm the only one that's kind o' going the now, y' know. Ken the boys are no the same, y' dunna get boys going the same. She comes here f' her dinner on a Thursday 'n' I go 'n' pick her up 'n' take her t' her meetin' on a Wednesday.

So, the Armstrong family reunion at their mother's birthday party had not been hugely successful since it had ended up with Maggie and Brenda not speaking to their mother or to Norah although Maggie had just started tentatively writing to her mother again. Interestingly, Connie had barely mentioned this split in the family and said that the reason she didn't see much of her daughter Brenda was that the bus fare from Grangemouth to Falkirk was so expensive.

Apart from the above there was one other event which stood out as supremely significant in Norah's lifetime, as she put it "The first thing that ever happened to us was when Alice lost her husband". Norah' eldest daughter, Alice, whom we've mentioned

before, had lost her husband five years previously when he died of cancer, leaving Alice to carry on with their five relatively young children. Norah was still very upset by Eddie's death and felt deeply sorry for Alice but also marvelled at her great strength.

Y' never stop worrying whether they're married or no. Alice is just that ... wi' all that's happened to her. Her 'n' her dad are right close. It's no much easier yet f' her I don't think. 'N' then her worry wi' Carole 'n' Daryl. She cares f' them all that much. She gets involved wi' them all. Oh ay, if anybody's ever worked hard f' her family it's her. I mean I could sit 'n' write a book about Alice 'n' the other girls would just agree wi' me. She's just that bit special. She has a big heart. Certainly a big heart. Y' wonder how somebody gets everything. She's just the type that seems t' be there f' t' take all the knocks and I resent that. Y' don't know how I resent Alice gettin' all that --- Things that goes on, eh? There's some folk sail through life. And yet if there's something happens she'll say, "Well, if that hadna happened maybe there was something worse going t' happen t' me 'n' I'd have got that instead. That's how she looks at things. I'll tell y' the great thing about her too - her contented nature. Contentment's a great thing. Oh ay. I've never been so contented as Alice. I'll make no bones about it. She doesna take that from me because there's always something I'm wanting. But Alice would sit 'n' listen t' what everybody has 'n' if she didn't have any of it, it would never bother her. Genuinely doesn't bother her. Just a great nature.

## Alice Clark

Alice, now Mrs. Clark, was Norah's first child, the one whose birth had been so troublesome. She was born on August 30th 1933, in Falkirk, at the home of her paternal grandparents. Like a good many people, and not surprisingly, her own first memories of childhood were about very happy times or very sad times, or about illness, her first memory being that of having diptheria when she was only three years old. Apart from that she recalled,

I remember going on holidays. We went to Ayr. We went t' Ayr ever year in life practically. Mum and dad and grandparents and aunts and uncles. It was a big family affair; we all went. We all went at one time ... When we went on the beach we were all one big happy family. I think I was the only child at that time connected with them all cos I was the oldest and I was made quite a lot of ... I think y' connect a lot o' things wi' illnesses too. I remember I hated ham 'n' fish f' a while 'n' that sounds stupid. It was connected wi' gettin' a poultice round my swollen glands 'n' I think it was a bread poultice and it looked like fish and smelt like ham. For years I never would look at fish and ham. And it was on holiday and I've got photographs on the beach, y' know, 'n' me crying, sittin' howling 'n' all wrapped up round m' neck.

Alice was six when the Second World War broke out and although she didn't remember much about the War she remembered what it had meant to her own family. She told me of her mother, Norah, working in munitions, sometimes on night-shift when the children were looked after by their father. During the war years he worked in the Fire Service although his normal job was that of burner blackener.



He had wanted t' go in the Navy, he had been desperate but he'd been in the Fire Service at one point and they wouldna let him join up because of this. He wasna allowed t' go. He just stayed at home. And I remember I was disappointed cos he didna get taken away cos when the other kids' dads came home they got chocolate or something and I never did. M' mother relieved, y' know, and I'm thinking this. It sounded kind of romantic saying y' dad was in the Army or the Navy or something and my dad was in the Fire Service. He's since said that he was extremely disappointed.

While Norah had referred to Donald Snr. being in the Fire Service during the War she had not elaborated to indicate his feelings on the matter but when Alice did it was reminiscent of what Connie had said Robbie had felt like during the First World War when he too had had to remain in Falkirk.

In fact, Alice well remembered Robbie, her maternal grandfather. She told me that he only had one leg and that he was the first person to die connected with her life. She also vividly remembered her maternal great grandparents, particularly her great grandmother who had died at the age of eighty-seven.

She was a real character, she was a midwife, y' know, and we used t go 'n' visit her regularly. That's m' grandmother's mother. I was in m' teens when she died. She was the one that was always wanting me t' make her ... 'n' m' great grandfather especially ... they were always saying they wanted t' be great, great grandparents. I would go on about folk being married too young but they were wanting t' encourage me, y' know, t' get married and have a family so they'd become great, great grandparents; but I didna, no while they were living. Oh ay, I used t' go 'n' see them 'n' m' grandmother, we all went regularly. Well, once a

week as a family we went round, y' know. Every week in life.

No doubt it was said in a jovial sense but it is interesting to note that Alice was encouraged to marry young by her great grandmother who had herself married at seventeen, and who would have loved to have attained the status of great, great grandmother.

Talking of regular visits to her maternal grandmother's (Connie) home Alice said that it was not only the weekly visits which stuck out in her mind.

New Year was brought in at her house. All the kids got put t' bed. She had all her family round at New Year. All the kids got taken, put t' bed, 'n' her daughters 'n' her sons-in-law 'n' her sons 'n' her daughters-in-law sort o' thing were all waiting t' let in New Year ... ay, we all went round. And on New Year's Day we all sat down at a huge table 'n' y' all got y' dinner on it 'n' the thing I remember most - I was always waiting till I was old enough t' join in at night when they all played cards, Newmarket, and it used t' be a right laugh. Us kids could hear them all screeching 'n' laughing ... 'n' y' had good memories o' this. My ambition was t' get int' this game o' Newmarket which I eventually managed. Our gran was a great one. She didn't have a palatial house but everybody was welcome, y' know, and she would feed everybody. That was no problem t' her. Oh no, all the world and his friend could come in sort o' thing 'n', er, she did all this.

So, Alice saw her grandmother, Connie, in much the same way as Norah, her mother, had seen her grandmother - as a capable and sociable woman at all times who despite hard work always had time for people.

As a child Alice dearly loved both sets of grandparents and had a lot to do with them all but she was also very aware of the differences between them. In her mind the two sides of the family had always been quite distinct.

On m' father's side they were quieter. His parents were, I'll no say 'strictly religious', cos they werena but they were what I would call 'good Christians'. They didna preach the church t' y' but they were gentle people, very gentle, and they were concerned with what y' were doing 'n' how y' were gettin' on at the school 'n' all y' accomplishments 'n' all this kind o' thing. And genuinely, no just f' the sake o' talking t' y'. They were a great old couple, they really were 'n' she would o' done anything f' anybody --- M, mother's side was the more ... her brothers would go f' a pint 'n' back the horses and y' saw another side. But y' got a lot o' laughs there. Y' got a laugh but a different way o' life really. More valuable the other side o' life, m' dad's sort o' mum 'n' dad, in a way. Y' morals were completely different, y' learnt a lot o' ways o' life, and a gentler side o' life really. And m' grandmother she was a laugh a minute and quite a character but y' really ... Granm' Armstrong this was, m' mother's mother. It was entirely different and at first when y' were really young y' thought "Oh it's better going there, everything's a laugh". And as y' got older y' realised that wasna the important thing in life, it was really the other side that was the more important one --- M' dad's mum 'n' dad were a really great couple and they were a really great miss when they went. I mean they were eighty-six as well when they died and they died wi'in ten days o' each other.

Every Sunday morning Alice and her sisters went to the Baptist Church and met up with their paternal grandfather and often their grandmother as well although she usually went to the evening service. After the service they would all walk back to



Mungalhead Road where the grandparents lived and have their lunch there.

M' grandfather spoke t' y' all the time, real interesting. He worked till, oh ... the job he was in, his dad before him had been in it fifty years, he was in it fifty years 'n' my dad was in it fifty. Between the three o' them they had a hundred and fifty-six years wi' Falkirk Iron Company. All followed on in the same job actually. M' grandfather was a good age when he retired, he was nearly seventy when he retired and even then, he only had one eye too, he only just had one eye. And, er, he started cleaning outside, he had his own house, and even at seventy when he retired he started cleaning the stone work t' keep him occupied! He could tell y' things about Falkirk y' never knew, notice things that should be obvious t' the eye ... And I used t' think, "Jings, he's only got one eye and he can see all that and I'm passing that every single day and never even notice it.

Alice was well aware how close her mother was to her paternal grandmother and told me much the same about the situation as Norah had done, saying that her mother and grandmother were like mother and daughter rather than mother and daughter-in-law and that when they lived together they got on really well. Alice was also very close to this grandmother, who taught her to swim.

She went t' the baths every Tuesday right up until she was an old woman, with her sister-in-law, and swam up and down the baths. Y' know, the old plain black bathing suits, up 'n' down the baths, 'n' they'd come out , 'n' go t' the Temperance Cafe for their tea 'n' then they took me when I was old enough, taught me t' swim. They used t' teach y' lying across a stool at first, how t' move y' arms 'n' legs.



Alice had also learnt to play the piano at her grandparents' house because that was where she went to practice after her piano lesson since her parents did not possess one. It seems that in many ways then Alice had an idyllic childhood, especially as far as grandparents were concerned, but this did not stop her realising how hard her own parents had to work to make ends meet. She was particularly aware of how hard her father had worked.

Mum 'n' dad were married quite young 'n' m' dad worked hard all his life. I mean he worked during the day 'n' he did things at night. And we got a holiday every year in life 'n' we were always well-dressed but he had t' work hard f' everything we had. I mean nothing came easy at any time.

Alice spoke a little about her brothers and sisters in their younger days but she seemed to have been closer to her dad than anyone. Her sister, Jessie, who was nearest to her in age was very quiet like her mother and then there was a gap of six years before her sister Alma was born, followed a couple of years later by a brother. At the time of his birth Alice said that she would have preferred another sister but at least her parents were pleased.

They used t' call m' dad's side The House of Orange. M' dad had the three girls before he had a boy 'n' his sister she had a girl first. And everybody said, "It's gonna be all girls here. Cos I remember the first boy that was born in the family was t' get this Hornby train set that was up at m' grandmother's. So instead of telling her it was a boy when it was born m' dad said, "I've got the Hornby train set!"

Alice used to be a bit of a tomboy and her father encouraged this although her mother slightly disapproved. She used to have wrestling matches with her dad and remembered that when she was a teenager her dad built a sledge for the younger ones which he and Alice would go out on at night when no-one could see them fooling around. Her father also encouraged her in running which she was quite good at. He used to instruct her in school races and told her to carry on once she had left the school. When she did leave she started work in Allied Iron Founders at Callendar Abbots and entered their Sport's Day. Her dad gave her a black cat mascot to put down her bra while she was running which must have been lucky because she won all the races she entered. The organisers hadn't expected this to happen and she ended up with three identical handbags for prizes! However, the greatest reward was seeing how proud her dad was. He had been an old Harrier himself and always had a deep interest in sport.

Besides taking up athletics in her teens Alice said that this was the time when she started "doing all the wrong things". This meant mainly behaviour which her mother strongly disapproved of, like going to the dancing at the ice rink which her mother called a "den of iniquity", mainly because at this time it was frequented by Canadian hockey players. Alice first went to dancing when she was thirteen, to the Learners' class at Doick's Ballroom. They didn't sell drink or anything like that but one felt grown-up going there especially since it was usually possible to sneak out a pair of high heels to wear when mother

wasn't looking. In contrast to her mother's statements of leniency Alice remembered being very strictly brought up in her teenage years, particularly since she was the oldest girl in the family and had to break the ice for the others.

The first person she went out with was a boy from work who gave her dad a box of chocolates to give to her and ask her to the pictures. Dates were nerve-racking occasions in those days she recalled, at least for men.

He was sittin' eating an ice cream, a chocolate ice, and suddenly that was me arriving. He stuck it in his pocket and forgot about it and the whole thing melted. He was soaking!

Alice decided this boy was "too keen", besides being in his early twenties when she was only fifteen, and he eventually gave up and went to Ireland to play professional football. She had several boyfriends after that, all of whom her mother kept a strict eye on, with a little help from her friends or, more specifically, her relations.

One I had been going out with had been seemingly engaged before and had broken it off 'n' she didn't want me t' have anything t' do with him because he'd been engaged before and broken it off 'n' I might get involved and get blamed f' breaking it off. Y' had t' watch all these kind o' things.

Alice then went on to describe how this process of checking worked out in practice.

M' grandma used t' have a lot t' do wi' that, m' mother's mother. She was a meddler. Oh much as she's a great character, she was a meddler in everything. She found out everybody's back history and she actually controlled her family, y' know, 'n' she could stir a wee bit. Oh ay, there's a real history o' that through her life, y' know. Oh ay, she's been a girl. And I mean she's old now and she is a character and we think she's great but I mean she has had her day. Y' know play one off against the other, she would.

So Grandma Armstrong (Connie) was not as uninterfering as Norah had made out she was and in actual fact quite the opposite was the case. She "kept her eye on everybody" and when she found something out she told the appropriate people. Alice remembers this being especially troublesome in her own case because her mother was slightly gullible and instead of telling Grandma Armstrong to mind her own business tended to take too much notice of what she had to report. Alice put this down to her mother's quiet nature which had been acquired while living with an aunt, as we already know.

We used t' say she was different f' the rest. We used t' think it was because m' mother was more or less brought up by an aunt at one time. Ay, it was m' grandmother's sister, that was her aunt. And I think her husband was dead and whether it was because she was on her own I don't know, or because m' grandmother, m' mum's own mum had a big family, but she was there quite a lot and was more or less brought up quite a bit by her cos she used t' say that. She lived till she was ninety or something and she was a 'good living' person, a very good living person 'n' m' mother used t' go t' what they call the 'Miller Hall'. A sort o' religious sect sort o' thing. Sort o' bretheren type o' idea. And so she was brought up a lot in that environment where the rest o' her family werena. She was the quietest o' the whole family. Y' know the rest'd



speak up 'n' wouldn't think twice about cursing 'n' swearing all the time or that, and even m' mother's sister who was a laugh, she could 'hell' and all the rest o' it but m' mother never said anything like that ... So, m' mother was easily influenced. Where m' mother's sister might o' said, "It's none o' your business", y' know, my mother, no. M' mother didna. I have recollections of m' mother going round during the day t' her mother's when we lived near 'n' she used t' come back home 'n' she'd be in tears at things her mother had said in connection wi' different things 'n' interfering in her life, y' know.

Grandma Armstrong made it her business to find out people's history by drawing upon the huge network of people she knew in the district, not just in Falkirk itself but other places like Grangemouth etc. She used to "rake up everybody's skeletons in the cupboard" which wasn't difficult because everybody had some if you looked hard enough.

Anyone I went out with she found out about. Even the one, as I say, the chap I went out with who'd previously been engaged t' somebody and it had been broken off, she found out all about this and he came from Grangemouth, kind o' outwith this bit! But she found all this out and m' mother would come back, "Y' didna tell me this". But this was it with everything, she got a hold when she found out something and this was the fly in the ointment, y' were t' watch this. Till eventually I ended up when I did meet m' husband there really was a big fly in the ointment!

Alice first met Eddie, who was later to become her husband, when she was seventeen, she was on a bus going to visit her friend and he was on the bus with his pal, Callum. Alice knew Callum because he was involved in running and he later invited her to join the Ladies' Section of the Harriers which she did.

As a result of her involvement she went to run at the Camelqn Gala Day where she met Callum's friend again. Alice and her friend arranged to meet the two boys later on at the dancing at the ice rink, the plan being that Alice would pair up with Callum and her friend with Eddie. However, as in all the best stories it was Alice who ended up with Eddie. The two boys were in 'digs' together at the time in Bainsford although Eddie originally came from Maddiston where his family still lived. After going out with him for a while Alice discovered, while looking through one of his old diaries, that he was married. It turned out that he had married a German girl while he was in the Army in Germany but it hadn't worked out. However, he had never bothered getting a divorce. Alice recalls,

For four years we had a right stormy love affair.  
Oh, I could write a thousand books quite honestly  
about it.

She never said anything to anybody when she found out about Eddie being married but the pal of hers had known about this previously, and she ended up going out with Alice's uncle and when she realised the family connection she told Alice's paternal grandmother about the rumour that Alice's boyfriend had been married. This grandmother of Alice's was not the interfering kind, she didn't like causing trouble in the family, so she simply let Alice know what she knew about Eddie and left it up to her to do something about it, to do the right and decent thing.

She didn't want t' cause a lot o' trouble. She didna want t' go cleippin' t' m' mum 'n' dad so she came t' me first and said.

Since this had little effect Alice's grandmother spoke to Eddie, appealing to the 'better side of his nature', to see if this course of action would get her any further and avoid the trouble that was doubtless brewing, the more so the longer the affair went on.

Then the family eventually found out through m' mother's mother. She found out, she really found out, and she went t' town on that. She went on at great lengths t' m' mother that he was married.

Alice was ordered not to see Eddie again and for a while she didn't but it wasn't long before temptation became too great and they re-started their affair. However, once again Alice was spotted by a relative and stopped.

Eddie said he knew that eventually I would be put off cos I would be worked on and worked on and worked on. So through him eventually it ended up I left the house 'n' went t' stay at his mother's. And he said that was the only way I could prove how much he meant t' me and t' m' mother 'n' father, by doing something like that. And it took an awful lot f' me t' do it, an awful lot. Cos I mean it wasna the kind o' family that y' just walked out on.

However, Alice's feelings for Eddie were at this stage stronger than her feelings for her family and so she decided she had to make a stand. One day when she was left to look after her

younger brother she gathered all her belongings together and left,

I was a very possessive person and I wouldna go without all m' belongings. Y' ought t' have seen me going away, I was laden. Everything I possessed practically, everything but the kitchen sink, and even puttin' double clothes on t' make sure I got everything away.

Eddie's mother had a big family, he was the oldest of two sisters and four brothers, but Alice and her belongings managed to squeeze in. She ended up staying for several months and was there for her eighteenth birthday. Her parents weren't completely in the dark because although she had no direct contact with them during this period her mother's younger sister, Alma, who was only one and half years older than Alice, visited regularly, and Alice's own sister worked at the same place as Alice. The story which was circulating about the town was that she was living with a married man and his kids despite the fact that nothing could have been further from the truth since Eddie was still living in lodgings. The move from home only made matters which had been bad before even worse because almost from the start the affair had been common knowledge in the community and was commonly frowned upon.

I remember m' dad. This sort o' brought it home t' me. He was going int' his work 'n' there was a lot o' men waiting t' clock in 'n' he was just puttin' his bike down 'n' one o' them shouted to him, "Did y' know y' daughter's going wi' a married man?" Seemed everybody knew, y' thought.



Eventually after a long stalemate it seemed that Alice's parents relented slightly and wrote to her asking her to go to see them. At this reunion they managed to sort things out because Mr. and Mrs. Briggs said that they had decided that what other people thought wasn't important. It was this aspect of the situation which had originally been bothering them most it seems, together with the fact that Eddie had not been truthful to Alice or anyone else at the beginning, as he should have been.

By the time Eddie's German wife was traced and the divorce finalised it was four years from when Eddie and Alice met till they got married.

But he was a great person. He was very intelligent, he was very athletic and he taught the kids all the right things in life.

Because he'd been from a big family Eddie had, like most other people from his background, left school at fifteen and had been in and out of a variety of jobs in the docks, in the foundries, on the buildings. However, after his marriage he studied at night school for Highers and went on from there to do a full-time teacher training course in Glasgow. When they were first married Alice and Eddie lived in a room in someone else's house in Grangemouth. Following this, the first house they got in Falkirk was three flights up in a tenement, just two rooms, a kitchen and an outside toilet. They had three of their children there before moving to the house, where Alice still lived, before

the birth of their fourth child. Alice had been married two years before her first child, Louise, was born but then it was only fifteen months before she had her second child, Carole, and then only a year and four days before her third child and first son, Chris, meaning she had three children under three years old.

It would appear that although she didn't complain about it to any great extent, Alice must have had a pretty difficult time while the kids were small because Eddie was away in Glasgow all day and he had to study at night. When he wasn't doing that and particularly at weekends, he was down at the Harrier's Club. Eddie had got involved in running when they moved back to Falkirk and most of his life from then on revolved around it.

That changed his whole life after that. He trained them, he was coach, he was president, he ran everything, he cleaned out the Club House.

It seems that Eddie was a fitness fanatic perhaps because he suffered quite badly from epilepsy. Alice had been aware of this since the time they were courting but she said,

There were very few people knew that he had it. He fought it all his life. I mean when he went in as a teacher his one worry was that they'd find out, that he'd take a fit, and that would be him finished. It was controlled ... The kids didn't know. They never knew ... Nobody knew, as far as I know anyway ... He had t' take phenobarbitones all the time, every day in life. The kids thought it was f' his sore back ... Running could bring it on but he kept running all his life. Y' know, he knew there was a chance but he didn't want t' give int' what he called 'the disease'. He wasna givin' int' it. He was fighting. He used t' push his body as far as it'd go before he took a turn.

Alice was responsible for most things to do with the house. She handled all the money and once they got a car she did all the driving because Eddie couldn't with his epilepsy. She also did most of the cooking and housework, partly because of Eddie's outside commitments, and partly because he had been almost wholly responsible for his mother's house in his younger days and wanted no more of it.

He could help me but no t' the extent he'd done with his mother's house cos we used t' say that finished him cos his mother didn't bother enough about housework and he practically ran the whole house. At his mother's he'd bathed the babies, looked after the house and cooked meals. He would cook here. Like at supper time I never made a supper unless somebody came in. He wouldn't do it then.

Most of the time Alice accepted her position of 'manager' in the family, revelled in it even, but she had to admit that when she reached forty some kind of panic set in for the first time.

After I had Louise I never worked. And when I hit my fortieth birthday that was the one time I thought I was gonna become a cabbage 'n' I was in a rut, 'n' I wanted t' go out t' work. "Y've got a big enough job wi' five kids", he'd say, "without going out t' work". I felt I was losing my identity at one point. I was just somebody that was expected t' look after the kids 'n' I wasn't a person in my own right.

This feeling might have gone further and led to serious ructions in Alice's marriage and family if something far more devastating hadn't hit them all at precisely this time. Eddie

took ill and cancer was diagnosed. Alice gave him all her attention. He was in hospital seven weeks before he died but Alice was still there all the time.

I would go up at two o' clock till five. I would come home at five, get the tea, get washed and what not, and be back up there f' six. And I was there from six till half ten or eleven, settling him down f' the night --- He made it very plain at the beginning that there was no way I was t' get upset, there were t' be no tears over his illness.

Following Eddie's instructions, by her own strength of character, and with help from all her family, Alice was able to survive this unimaginably awful time.

My whole family helped though. M' young sister was forever here seeing that the washing was all done and the ironing and everything was done correctly in the house. And they would come round and be with the kids at night, all this kind o' thing. M' mother 'n' that all rallied round and that was it. Y' know we were closer there. His family didna come down ... It was funny at the time. My oldest girl Louise was the one who could do anything in the house. Carole had two left hands, always had, didn't do anything much in the house, and she was highly strung. But she was the one that took over when her dad was ill.

When I spoke to Alice, Eddie had been dead five years and it seemed that she was the one who had accepted his death or got over it most. Her mother and father, her sisters and her own children were still recovering from the terrible blow it had dealt them. Only now were there signs that they were at last pulling themselves together.



When Eddie died at least I had my kids to help me. But m' mother 'n' sisters were the people it affected a lot. M' mother still is kind o' funny about him dying. She couldna accept this and was miserable about it and would weep about it f' years. M' young sister was the same, she wouldna go t' church after it or anything.

Alice's children missed their dad because he had spent so much time with them all, not in the house but out on the running track. He had not only been a husband and a father he had also been the family's trainer, and an obvious source of cohesion and strength. Alice herself had taken up running again when the children got older and Carole, Chris and Stewart also ran while Louise threw the discus.

We were all involved as a family. We used t' eat, sleep and drink athletics in this house, this was the whole thing. We were really close that way ... I think in a way it was a bigger miss them losing a dad because there's some men go t' their work and then they fall asleep or go t' the pub. Their's didna. They were involved with him. When he went out running Carole 'n' Chris went out with him; every day in life.

Carole had been an especially good runner, an aggressive runner like her dad. Chris was in line to follow in his sister's footsteps as she went on to greater honours until their father's death changed everything. While he was alive they had run for him as a person perhaps more than they had run for themselves and when he was no longer around their enthusiasm was no longer fired.

He was the kind o' person if he wanted y' t' do something ... I mean he didna force y' t' do anything, y' did it f' him. Y' ended up ... this is how Carole 'n' Chris was ... y' wanted t' please him ... Carole tried but she wasna the same without her dad. He was there t' push her, he pushed her hard, she had t' work f' him 'n' she did it. He was the type o' person, he pushed y' t' the limit and y' amazed y'sel' y' could do it.

Before her father's death Carole had "been a wee girl, quite open about everything". She hadn't been bothered about dancing or parties or even a best friend because of her total commitment to her father and to running which meant she was kept to a strict routine of training. However, this side of her life slipped when her dad died and she started making up for lost time by going to dances all over the place, by smoking and having boyfriends. Alice considered that Carole had made some grave mistakes at this time in her life which Carole herself blamed her father's death for but Alice had told her that she could not do this and had to begin to take responsibility for her own actions. However, it is clear from other things which Alice said that to a certain extent she was in agreement with her daughter, by seeing Eddie's death as the trigger to behaviour which was quite out of character. How far this was the case and how far it was simply Carole growing-up is difficult to tell but it probably would have been the case that had Eddie lived Carole and her sister would have continued in athletics longer and had a different life.

As it was they both got married fairly young to husbands whom Alice, despite the fact that she quite liked them, didn't wholeheartedly approve of. Aside from the fact that in many ways

Alice's own husband had been a remarkable man she had been quite submissive to him but her thinking along these lines had become rather more progressive by the time I spoke to her, and she now thought, indeed insisted that things in this day and age should be different. She was quite irrate about the fact that Louise's husband, Jack, was content to live exactly the same kind of life his dad had lived before him, one which boiled down to going to work and then going for a pint but she pointed out the undesirability of this state of affairs to Louise in no uncertain terms.

He's just that type so he's gonna have t' be educated out o' it ... See he was brought up in a mining village, well that's all the men do. If y' wanted t' find his dad when y' went through t' visit him, he was in the pub. Louise didna like it. And I'll say t' her, "Now watch y' don't end up that way, Y' have t' fight it or y' will. If y' give in that's it f' the rest o' y' life". As long as she's got the strength o' character t' see that she doesna. It's the minute she gives in --- These days are passed. 'N' I'm trying t' bring my sons up that way. It'll no be the case o' their mother cleaning at the back o' them and when they get married they'll have t' be a 50/50 partnership, do housework as well if their wife works.

Carole hadn't been very interested in boys or marriage as a teenager, Alice recalled vividly, and complained bitterly about the boy on her first date kissing her all the time in the pictures so that she couldn't see the film.

No she couldna take this. She liked boys t' be really friendly wi', just like a girl, a real pal. Y' know, she didn't want all this sex coming int' it. She wanted a pal. Cos everybody got on great

wi' her, especially old people --- She just knows what t' say t' people. She doesna have t' think it just comes out.

Carole was still a great character despite the fact that she was highly strung but Alice had quite a trying time with her for a while when she became, as her grandmother described it, a little "harem-scarem". She started going out with the man who became her husband, Daryl, and went off to live with him on and off before eventually finding herself pregnant. At first Alice didn't have a very high opinion of Daryl, she thought he was a bit of a "chancer" especially because he could be so charming. However, he's not as bad as at first expected. His worst fault as far as Alice was concerned was his indecisiveness which resulted in him leaving decisions, major or minor, up to Carole. Of course Alice had told them both straight.

I told Daryl that when he can take all the responsibility and accept that as his role then he'll be man. I says, "Then y'll gain respect 'n' then y'll gain everybody's respect cos y're capable o' doing things. That makes a man o' y', nothing else. Being able t' father a child never made a man o' y'. Anybody can do that. Any male can do that. But t' make a man y've got t' be a strong person".

It was Alice who stood out as being the strong person in her story, a strong person in the vein of Connie and Connie's mother, her grandmother and great grandmother, women she bore more resemblances to than her own mother. At the time of the interview she had started working again as an auxiliary nurse, besides keeping control of her household which had grown rather



than shrunk and contained her three sons, two of whom were out of work, and Carole and Daryl and their new baby, her first grandchild, Jenny. Most of the time since Eddie's death she had gone it alone because although she loved her family there were pros and cons in allowing them to become too deeply involved in one's life.

It's difficult bringing up kids without a man, especially teenagers. I mean my family were all round me and all the rest o' it 'n' I could turn t' them f' anything but there were certain things wi' kids y' didna want them t' know because they would turn 'n' get on at them and y' don't want them t' get annoyed at your family. Y' want them t' think they're good 'n' all the rest o' it. Y' don't want them t' know all their faults or the things that are giving you a bad time because they immediately think from my point of view. "Our Alice's gettin' a bad time. We don't want her to have this. She's had enough in her life". And then they turn on the kids. I don't want my kids 'n' my side t' argue or dislike each other. It's stupid maybe but I just don't want it t' blow up.

### Carole Dillon

Carole Dillon, twenty-one, was the second of Alice's children, the second daughter, the second grand-daughter of Norah and Connie's second great grandchild. Carole's first daughter, Jenny, was, by a day, her first daughter, Alice's first grand-daughter, Norah's first great grandchild and Connie's first great-great grandchild. Quite an achievement, even if it had been a mistake. Carole and her relatively new family were living with Alice and the three boys and the dog when I interviewed her, and in fact it was Carole whom I interviewed first in the

family.

Carole was married to her boyfriend, Daryl, in October 1979 and Jenny was born a month later.

We actually lived together for a while 'n' we weren't actually gonna get married because t' me I didn't actually believe in marriage. I mean, I love him very much 'n' he feels the same about me 'n' I didn't think we needed t' get married but he wanted to 'n' I kept putting it off. It's no different from livin' together anyway.

Part of the reasoning behind Carole's line of thinking on this matter was rooted in the fact that she'd been 'put off by all the divorces' she'd been hearing about at the time. Interestingly, Alice had said, in her version of the on and off situation of Carole's marriage, that Daryl had been the one who had been dithering about. The ceremony was called off twice but on the third time they actually made it. They'd known each other for about a year and, as pointed out in the quote, had lived together on and off during that time. This co-habiting was something that Carole's mother was originally against but which she eventually 'came round to'. Not having met Daryl she thought he sounded conceited but revised her opinions somewhat after getting to know him.

Daryl, at twenty-five, was four years older than Carole. He had a twin sister, an ill mother and his father was dead. He had trained in London as a hairdresser and then moved to Aberdeen to

continue in his profession where he worked for a "sort o' loaded fella". It was on Daryl's eventual return to his birthplace of Falkirk that Carole met him. At the time Daryl's mother was away looking after his grandmother, leaving her flat unoccupied and available for her son to share with Carole. However, on Mrs Dillon's return Carole moved back to her mother's where she had remained ever since, having been joined by Daryl after their marriage. At the time I talked to Carole they had in fact just learnt that they had been allocated a house in Hallglen by the Scottish Special Housing Association which they would be moving to in the near future.

Immediately before her marriage Carole had worked as a sport's attendant in Hallglen Sports Centre. She said that she might work again, that she'd like to, although Daryl wasn't keen on the idea. He was supposed to be in the process of opening his own hairdressing business in Falkirk although the more time I spent with the family the more I began to think that this was one of Daryl's dreams which had led Alice to be slightly wary about him.

Carole had been quite ill when she was pregnant although she didn't seem unduly concerned about it, either when I spoke to her or at the time. She had suffered from blood clots and had had to go into hospital for a couple of weeks before the birth which was eventually started early because the clots had started moving. When I spoke to Carole it seemed that the problem with clots in her legs was recurring but still she wasn't worried saying that

she thought women took things like that in pregnancy, "it's just the luck o' the draw".

Carole's elder sister, Louise, was pregnant at about the same time, and also had considerable trouble throughout the period. She had been nine stone but went up to seventeen owing to some kind of trouble with her kidneys so she was hospitalised on and off all the way through her pregnancy, and solidly for the final two months because of very high blood pressure. Understandably Alice was terribly worried about both her girls but Carole said that she just kept thinking "I've probably been through worse". The thing that had bothered Carole most about that whole business, apart from the unnaturalness of being induced and receiving pain-killing injections, was the fact that she might end up giving birth before her sister who had become pregnant slightly before Carole. This was the main thing that was playing on her mind and she continually told the hospital staff that they were not to start her before Louise, who was in the same ward, just a few beds away. However, owing to circumstances beyond everyone's control it turned out that Carole 'beat' her sister by a day. Daryl was present at the birth and so was Alice for part of the time because although it wasn't usual for mother's to be allowed in Alice received special treatment since she was an auxiliary at the hospital. Despite Alice's well-founded worries about her daughters and grandchildren Carole said,



Mum used to make jokes about all this. She said, "Ay, y're both delicate 'n' I had five 'n' had no problems at all". She's never had a day's illness in her life. She's really fit. She's great. She keeps everybody going all the time. She's the life and soul of the party.

Louise had been married before Carole but "she was all for it" because although a discus thrower she was domesticated whereas Carole said of herself,

I never thought of myself as domesticated at all. I've always been a tomboy. I mean, I was an athlete. I ran cross-country 'n' things like that 'n' I ran through muck, in all kinds of weather. I just wasna a lady. 'N' yet things have worked out fine. I never regret it. I'll never regret it.

Running had been Carole's life at one time and she said that she fully intended getting back to the sport once the trouble with her legs was sorted out.

Athletics has been everybody's life in here. I mean, even m'<sup>mum</sup> she was a sprinter ... It was m'. dad that coached us all. He was a hard man, he would really push y' t' y' utmost. He'd say, "I'm no wanting y' best, I'm wanting better than y' best". Y' know, he'd push me till I was actually ... He had a way o' readin' everybody's mind 'n' knowing what they could do. But, y' know, it was really him that got us all runnin' 'n' things like that.

During the time that Carole excelled at her sport and was interested in it, she ran at meetings almost every weekend. At home she went around with her brothers either running or scrumping.

That was my heyday ... I like adventure, that sort o' thing. I like t' do something different all the time.

However, in her mid-teens, and shortly after her father's death, Carole went through a noticeable transition due no doubt to the combined effects of the death of her father, her age, and leaving school. She stopped running and got rid of her tomboy image. She went to the quite the other extreme. Immediately on leaving school Carole, like many of her contemporaries and predecessors had gone to work in the office of a small foundry before moving on to work in a bigger foundry, Carron, where she was soon promoted from office junior to junior wages clerk. At this time in her life Carole said that she never went out much socially in the evenings and had never had a drink. However, after working at Carron for two years she was made redundant and went to work in a gentlemen's boutique, 'Lamplight', as a result of which she started going around with "posers". She got "quite serious" her sister's husband's friend, Gary, who had permed hair, dark sunglasses, a sports car and was always going on holiday.

He looked great --- He came to this house every night that we would go out 'n' talk t' m' mum.

Carole said that Gary was cocky but he was funny and she really liked him a lot. He was the first person she'd got 'serious' about. However, there was to be no happy ending to this first love because it turned out that Gary was married and lived with

his wife in Glasgow. Jack, Carole's brother-in-law, had said that he'd been married but was divorced although Carole remembered her mother making the comment that he could have still been married, a mother's intuition. Carole admitted that she had felt a lot for Gary but lost any feeling for him whatsoever as soon as she learnt the truth about him. Her potential love for him turned to hate and before long her affection was focussed on someone else. This fella was good looking, had a sense of humour and was an international runner to boot. Apparently Alice always thought that Carole would end up marrying a runner because of her previous strong interest in sport and hoped that this relationship would be the thing to re-kindle Carole's love for running. The pair of them got on great seemingly although he was quite a heavy drinker which Carole didn't approve of very much. What really put her off him, however were his serious intentions.

He was the type who just wanted t' get married 'n' have a family. He was like that 'n' f' men t' be like that it's funny.

While going out with the runner Carole met Daryl and two-timed them for a while because she couldn't make her mind up which one she liked best. Eventually she decided she preferred Daryl and finished her other relationship after three months.

Carole had had her first boyfriend at the age of fifteen and remembered it well because retrospectively it was a funny episode, one which Alice was to tell me about with great

hilarity, although it is not quoted in the thesis. Carole had met the boy through a mutual association with running. He was a good deal older than Carole, twenty-two, and lived in Glasgow but they arranged to meet in Falkirk and go to the pictures. Carole's mum and dad took her to meet him off the train from Glasgow but it didn't stop at Falkirk and went speeding off into the distance to Edinburgh, taking Carole's first date with it! Eventually they did make it to the pictures.

'N' we went t' the pictures 'n' he kept on trying t' kiss me 'n' I didna like it, I didna understand it, 'n' all my emotions were gettin' in a turmoil. I told him I had a migraine coming on and had t' go t' the toilet and I ran down the road 'n' left him in the pictures --- I mean, all I did was climb trees 'n' go out wi' the boys in the street 'n' everything. I mean, I used t' have fights wi' everybody on the street --- 'N' t' go out wi' somebody t' kiss me. I didna understand.

Carole didn't like secondary school, she wasn't interested, except for when they went on visits to old people and mentally ill patients as part of Caring Studies. Carole liked old people, even preferring their company to that of young people. She had a lively personality and a good deal of patience when it came to things like this so she looked forward perhaps as much as the old and infirm to these weekly visits. One of the mental patients she became very friendly with was the first person associated with her life to die. Soon after this blow however, her own father was to die and after that she started actually playing truant from school, along with her brothers. They all used to go up to Callander Estate where Chris used to paint and the others



pose for him. It hadn't been possible literally not<sup>to</sup> attend school before because although Mr. Clark didn't teach at their school he was well-acquainted with all the teachers there.

Carole admired and loved her father very much. She told me how he hadn't gone on to further education until his late twenties/early thirties and that previous to this he had tried his hand at all manner of things, including gardening. Her admiration had grown after his death when Carole learnt that her father had had all the drawbacks of being an epileptic to overcome besides those of being socially mobile.

I never even knew. Mum told me because she had to tell us when we had the babies because they canna get certain injections if there's been an epileptic in the family --- But I mean it never affected him cos he was very intelligent 'n' he was good at everything he put his mind to. He could make things, carve things, do everything. He could play the violin, the guitar. He sang 'n' played the piano 'n' he was a teacher. He was good at runnin' too.

To conclude Carole's story and the family's story I will end with a lengthy quote from her, prompted by the original letter I sent to respondents which I included in the methodology chapter, and which will bring us back full-circle to Connie.

I couldna tell y' much about love and marriage, I've no been married long enough. I think y' would need t' ask m' great grandmother about that. She's only eighty odd! M' grandmother was married, say, about sixteen, 'n' her mum was married young 'n' she's brilliant, she looks about fifty --- She's never had a day's illness in her life, neither m' great grandmother nor m' grandmother.

They've all been perfectly healthy. M' great grandmother's husband lost a leg in the war 'n' he died when I was born. But she's a great woman. She's got umpteen friends. Every time I go round wi' Jenny there's about five or six o' them sittin' in her front room wi' their tea 'n' their biscuits, cigarettes all lying. They're all puffin' away 'n' drinking their tea. 'N' oh God, they're really old. They smoke at that age 'n' they puff away f' ages. 'N' they all sit 'n' talk about how the world's gonna end 'n' everything ... But she's a great old woman. She really is. She lives for bingo. Everybody helps her out 'n' gives her money 'n' she goes t' the bingo ... She's really active. 'N' she acts. There's an old folks' thing 'n' they sing 'n' act. They go round old people's homes. She's eighty-six now, I think, 'n' she goes round! She dresses up 'n' wears her knickerbockers 'n' paints her cheeks 'n' everything. She's supposed t' be a doll or something. They're cases 'n' a half! Some woman. 'N' talkin' to her y'd think it was m' mum's mum 'n' she's m' great grandma. At the moment she's got her son back livin' with her. His marriage has broke up 'n', I mean, he's a good age 'n' he's back stayin' wi' her. Oh, 'n' the things she does f' him. He has t' have his food done a certain way 'n' everything. She's some laugh. Some woman altogether. I mean y' canna imagine anything happening to her because she's never been ill. The only time she ever hurt herself was when she was coming back from bingo one night 'n' she'd won over a hundred pound. 'N' she was walking home, no any different, just walking along 'n' she was cuttin' across the park cos she lives at the back of it 'n' somebody grabbed her handbag. 'N' they knocked her down 'n' they broke her wrist. But y' know what happened? She grabbed her handbag, she turned round 'n' kicked 'em in between the legs 'n' he never got any o' her money. The next thing he was away.

1901 QUEEN VICTORIA DIES AFTER 63 YEARS ON THRONE ...  
1901 MARCONI MAKES CONTACT - CORNWALL TO NEWFOUNDLAND ...  
1902 BOER WAR ENDS ...  
1908 OLD AGE PENSIONS FOR OVER 70s ...  
1909 FIRST CROSS CHANNEL FLIGHT BY BLERIOT ...  
1910 EDWARD VII DIES ...

1914 OUTBREAK OF FIRST WORLD WAR ...  
1916 MORE WOMEN INTO FACTORIES ...  
1917 SOME FOOD RATIONING ...  
1918 WAR ENDS, 100,000 DEAD FROM SCOTLAND ...  
1918 WOMEN GO HOME ...  
1918 WOMEN OVER 30 GET VOTE ...

## CHAPTER SIX

### DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPIRE

#### Introductions

#### Grace Anderson

The oldest member of this generation was Grace Anderson who had been born in 1887 which meant that she was ninety-three when I spoke to her. She was registered blind, had sugar diabetes, and quite serious digestive problems plus the expected aches and pains of old age but despite having been in failing health for a considerable number of years Grace was mentally alert and physically very active, showing the same strength of character and vivaciousness of spirit that Connie had. She summed it up thus, "I'm hardy. If y' don't manage y'll die 'n' that's it". Grace had lived alone since her husband, Tam, came home from his job as a school crossing attendant, ate "two gammon slices and an egg", sat in the chair and died in his sleep more than twenty years previously at the age of seventy-two. She was up bright and early at 6.45 every morning to tidy up, make her bed and have her breakfast before her home help arrived! In addition to this she did her own shopping, went to meetings of one kind or



another at one o' clock on every day, except Friday, of every week, and went on holiday on her own because she said that she "soon made friends".

### **Mary Arnott**

Grace had been born in Falkirk but the next lady I would like to introduce had been born further afield in Tillicoultry. Mrs Mary Arnott (86) was born there in 1894 but had come to Falkirk as a young girl with the rest of her family when her father was desperately looking for work at the turn of the century. Like Connie and Grace, Mary was still leading an independent and active life. She had lived alone since the death of her husband, sixteen years before I met her, when he was seventy.

### **Edith Archer**

Mrs. Edith Archer (86) was born in the same year as Mary, in the mining village of Slammanan, just outside Falkirk, where she still lived, with her husband, in 1980. Physically Edith wasn't able to get about too well but she was lively and talkative.

### **Amy Aitken**

In 1898, two years after Edith was born, Mrs Amy Aitken (82) came into the world in Port Glasgow. So like Mary, Amy was an incomer to the district although she came to Grangemouth after

she was married when her husband, Jack, was searching for a job during the Depression of the twenties. Both Jack and Amy still lived in Grangemouth. Amy was another lady whose physical health was failing and whose mental state fluctuated but on the occasion when I visited she was in fine form.

### **Nellie Allan and Maisie Agnew**

This brings us to Mrs Nellie Allan (80) born in Falkirk towards the end of the first year of the new century and, finally, to Mrs Maisie Agnew (76) born four years later, also in Falkirk. Both Nellie and Maisie were widows and lived alone. Nellie's husband had died in 1967, aged seventy-one, from cancer of the bladder, and Maisie's husband had died aged sixty-one, from a heart attack. Once more it was striking how very active both these ladies were and how sharp their thinking still was. Indeed, I was amazed how very well members of this 'first' generation, who could perhaps be said to have witnessed the greatest changes in their lifetimes, had adapted to a world which in some ways was totally different from the one which they had been born into around the turn of the century.

### **Childhood**

### **Grace Anderson**

When Grace Anderson was born on Kerse Lane in 1887 she

became her parent's fifth child and third daughter, three more children quickly followed her to complete the Anderson family of four girls and four boys. During her childhood her father, Will, was employed as the carriage driver of a local doctor before going on to enjoy the 'honour' of driving the first 'bus' in Falkirk. Will was a fine family man, good to his wife and children but he died at the age of forty-three, from pneumonia. Grace herself was thirteen at the time and remembered his death well.

He got up off his sick bed after only two days and went oot to his work cos he couldna afford t' stay off. Y' see y' didna get help. He went back to his work 'n' took pneumonia 'n' he was dead 'n' buried in ten days. Ten days f' he was took ill, he was dead and buried. Forty-three years old! And what a braw man.

At the time Grace's mother, Sarah, was pregnant with her youngest daughter whom obviously Will was never to see. On his death Sarah started to take in sewing.

She sat 'n' sewed all day. Y' got no money, y' see. M' mother was a dressmaker, took in sewing and that's what we lived on.

All the family had to pull together and Grace for her part used to walk round the big houses, "there were nae buses", in Larbert, Dollar Park and Carronvale selling herrings from a big basket.

I got away f' school early at night so that I could go these messages. I got off at dinner times instead of nights t' take the fish 'n' I left school at thirteen instead of fourteen. I'd do the messages 'n' that brought in a copper or two. Well, that copper always bought something. And the man of the fish shop knew the circumstances so he always gave me a bit of fish f' a meal.

Grace was well aware that these were terrible and trying times for her mother, being left with a family of eight and only having the bare necessities of life.

Y' only got what y' really needed 'n' no more. Y' got soup. Y' got a bone 'n' there was a man had a veg shop, where the Masonic Arms was, 'n' y' went up wi' y' basket for tuppence worth of veg - leek, carrot, turnip, potatoes - everything f' soup f' tuppence 'n' it did all the family f' two days. Y' just had t' eat what y' could get. Another day y' got steak 'n' y' all got a wee bit. We always had plenty of veg, potatoes, porridge and milk.

Particularly because Sarah sewed from morning till night help from the children in the house was essential, "everybody had t' do their bit".

We had shelves along - with dishes. Everybody had a turn, every Friday, all the shelves and the wally dogs. Boys and girls took it in turn.

The Andersons lived in a room and kitchen but Grace said that it was "lovely 'n' big 'n' could've made four". Her mother was very enterprising and improved the rented property by putting a partition across the end of the kitchen and getting men to build a brick wash-house on to the end of it.



She put a boiler in it 'n' then we got a bath from Cockburn's, an iron bath from the foundry, 'n' we whitewashed it 'n' we'd all have a bath every Sunday. Mum put the boiler fire on every Sunday morning 'n' it warmed the whole place up.

So by her own and her children's efforts Mrs Anderson survived the loss of her husband very well and achieved a happy family life, together with a rather grand dwelling for the times. Perhaps this was why Mary showed such magnificent fortitude in her own life.

### **Mary Arnott**

Mary's family of origin was the same size as Grace's, having nine children, two boys and seven girls. Mary was her parents' seventh child and youngest daughter. Her father, Charlie, worked in Mungal Foundry from when he came to Falkirk from Tillicoultry until he was seventy-two, reflecting the lack of a formal retirement age at the time; her mother never worked outside the home.

### **Edith Archer**

Born, as already noted, in the same year as Mary, Edith came from a slightly larger family. She was one of ten children, seven girls and three boys. Edith was the second child and the eldest daughter. Her father worked at the pit but her mother never worked after she was married, "she couldn't with ten

children". Her mother and father had both started work at the pit at the age of nine - Bob underground and Netty on the pit top! They had been born next door to each other and had gone to school together - "they were so happy 'n' they were never separate all their days".

Being the eldest daughter Edith helped a lot in the house with the chores and the numerous children who followed her.

T' tell the truth I wasna very much at the school. M' mother had a big family, ten, 'n' I was oftener off watching children --- there was no water in the house, y' had t' carry the water 'n' y'd go over t' the pit t' get the water t' start the washing. I was always off school these days. In the summer m' mother used t' kindle a fire 'n' wash outside but in the winter y' had t' wash inside 'n' there was no drying green.

#### Amy Aitken

Amy Aitken was also from a family of ten, she had nine brothers and sisters and was the youngest of the lot. She said that she never knew some of her elder siblings because they had left the house before she was born. Her father, Alf, worked in the sugar house, where he eventually became foreman. Amy said that her mother "never worked" but later said that she worked at home making clothes, particularly underwear, and since she seemed to do this all day every day I assume she made the items to sell. Of her childhood Amy said,

We were all brought up respectable --- It was a struggle but I believe we were happier than the young ones are now.

Although realising that life was "a struggle" Amy did recognise that being the youngest child of a large family meant that she was spoilt and had a much better childhood than her older brothers and sisters.

### **Nellie Allan**

Nellie Allan was from a relatively small family compared to the others in this generation - she was one of four children, the second child and eldest daughter. The difference in the size of this family cannot be explained in terms of religion because all the women in this generation were in fact from Protestant families but could perhaps be explained by the fact that Nellie's mother was a nurse at Bellsdyke Hospital, and may have known more about birth control methods or may have had better access to contraceptives than many women. Nellie's father worked in an iron foundry and his reasonable wage together with his wife's, plus the fact that the family was fairly small, meant that they were quite well-off - "the house was furnished so we were considered to be well-off".

### **Maisie Agnew**

Finally, Maisie Agnew once again came from a large family. Maisie was the fourth born of twelve but the three children

before her had died, at the ages of eight years, three years and four months, so she was the eldest living. As such she was kept busy. Her father, George, was a connection moulder in Callander Abbotts foundry, and from being very young she took his piece in a hankie before school every morning.

Oh y' had all that t' do. Then when I was ten until I was twelve I delivered milk before going t' school. It was in small cans with handles and I picked up the empties on my way back. It was small money but I did it f' the family. I did many a wee job.

Of course, it wasn't only "wee jobs" outside the house that kept Maisie busy.

Every so often I was off school t' watch the others t' let m' mother get the washing done 'n' then I was given a line t' take t' the teacher. The headmaster always sent f' me 'n' I just used t' open his door 'n' he'd say, "Washing day again?" I'd be off one day a week or one day a fortnight. I was glad to leave because of this - I dreaded it every time. I got exempt from school before I was fourteen to help with the family.

## Adolescence

On leaving school, around the age of fourteen, the girls went into a variety of jobs. Grace went into service as a cook; Mary went to the laundry; Edith worked in a mill as did Amy; Nellie became a shop assistant and Maisie a ward's maid.



## Grace Anderson

Grace started work in 1901 when she went to join the Brown household, as a cook. The Browns lived in Falkirk although Mr Brown worked in Glasgow as a financier. Work in the Brown's house started at six every morning and it was hard but Grace said that she was good at it and she enjoyed it and took it in her stride, having been used to hard work at home.

I had to rise early in the morning. I'd come down about six to the kitchen with the stone floor 'n' the big open grate. They had their breakfast about eight because Mr Brown went f' the train between eight and nine.

Grace felt that the Browns were good and kind to her. She appreciated very much the fact that they had given her her first house when her first child was born despite the fact that the side of it fell down after a year and they had move out because the property was condemned.

## Mary Arnott

Mary Arnott started work seven years later than Grace in 1908. She found a job in a laundry, like Connie, where she worked from six in the morning till six at night to earn four shillings a week. At first she was given the task of ironing but was soon promoted to repairing skirts on a machine and from there to cleaning hats. The latter was a particularly intricate job

for the decorated canvas hats had to be stripped of their silk which was then washed before they were put back together and returned to their former glory. It was hard work but Mary quite enjoyed it. However, she did want to leave the laundry to work in the factory where the pay was much bigger. Her mother wouldn't hear of it even though two of Mary's elder sisters already worked in the factory. It seems that it was undesirable to have daughters working in factories and if it could be avoided, as it could in cases of younger girls in the family like Mary, then it was avoided.

### **Edith Archer**

Edith Archer, who left school and started work in the same year as Mary, started her 'career' in Dunblane woollen mill. She lived in Bannockburn at the time. The family had moved to Bannockburn when she was seventeen to a room and kitchen, in a miner's row there, which had no running water and dry toilets outside.

I had t' walk from Bannockburn t' Stirling t' get the six o' clock train t' Dunblane and I didn't get back t' Stirling till eight o' clock. And since the last bus from Stirling to Bannockburn was at seven o' clock I had to walk home at night as well.

The distance between Stirling and Dunblane is about three miles and, considering that the distance between Stirling and Bannockburn is approximately the same, this means that Edith would leave the house around 6.15 a.m. and return fourteen and a

half hours later around 8.45 p.m.! At the mill Edith worked on a loom, a ginny which went backwards and forwards and which had massive bobbins of woollen thread that had to be threaded through certain needles. For this she was paid six shillings a week.

Edith did this for six months before obtaining a job in Bannockburn Mill. Here she worked on a different type of big loom making tapestry tablecloths and bed mats. The tablecloth loom had literally thousands of threads which all had to go in the correct place to ensure that no marks or flaws appeared on the finished cloth. Edith stressed that she liked the work and was back there three times after she was married. The main drawback of the job was that her legs got tired from being on her feet all the time. However, "it was interesting, it really was an interesting job and I was always on a different pattern". In Bannockburn Mill Edith started work at 6.15 a.m. and finished at 5.00 p.m. with an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. At five shillings a week her wages were slightly less here than Dunblane but the travelling time and thereby the working day were obviously greatly reduced. Wages did gradually rise until after nine years (1917), by which time Edith was an overseer, she was receiving three pounds a week.

### **Amy Aitken**

Amy Aitken, who began her working life in 1912, also worked in a mill but in this instance it was a canvas mill in Port

Glasgow. A friend of her's worked in the mill, at the time she was looking for a job, and spoke for her. She said that the work wasn't hard because it was simply a matter of threading the machines and then watching them weave the canvas. Work started at 6.00 a.m. and finished at 5 or 5.30 p.m. with breaks for breakfast and dinner. Amy remembered that her father always rose at 5.00 a.m. and always woke her at 5.30 a.m. ready to start the day.

### **Nellie Allan**

Nellie Allan became a shop assistant in a fruit shop in Falkirk just after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. She worked from eight in the morning till eight at night on weekdays and from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturdays, with half a day on Wednesdays and five days unpaid holiday a year! On Saturdays because she finished so very late her father always went to the shop to meet her and see her safely home.

### **Maisie Agnew**

If you remember Maisie Agnew was glad to leave school in 1918 because she was fed up and embarrassed with having to take so much time off for domestic reasons. For six months after leaving school she helped her mother in the house but then got a job as a ward's maid in the cottage hospital in Falkirk where she lived in. She was there for three years working from 6.30 a.m. until suppertime, about 7.30 at night. The maids had every second



Sunday off and one afternoon a week. They slept in dormitories and had their own sitting room. Maisie remembers the job consisting mainly of polishing everything in sight. Days started on hands and knees polishing the ward floors with beeswax polish before moving on to such jobs as polishing the cutlery or washing, boiling, ironing and rolling bandages which were used and re-used in these days. Days finished many hours later after clearing up the dishes from the patients' suppers.

All the instructions f' the day's jobs were on a big notice on the ward kitchen door. Y' work was all clockwork.

Maisie was paid twenty-six shillings a month plus her keep which after three years she decided wasn't enough. She went to try to get a job in the dye works for considerably more pay but was unsuccessful. What did come out of the attempt though was a job working as a domestic for the manager's wife, who was looking for help at the time. Maisie worked for Mrs Wright for two years before moving on to take up the post of cook-general in Crombie House just above Maddiston. This was a farmhouse which belonged to the Frasers, whose fortunes accrued mainly from their tea factory in India. Maisie who had originally learnt to cook well from her mother was in charge of all the downstairs of the house and had a very responsible, challenging and enjoyable job. She had come a long way from scrubbing floors and answering to the matron.

Wherever the girls worked and whatever their wages, they worked for their families and gave their wages to their mothers. This objective of leaving school and starting work to enhance the coffers of the household fund was never questioned, it was a fact of life, everyone did it. Amy Aitken recalled the ritual of 'pay night' vividly.

M' mother used t' put on a clean apron, wash her face and comb her hair, and stand at the door 'n' y' dropped y' pay in her apron as y' went in.

### **First World War and One Marriage**

At the outbreak of the First World War Grace was twenty-seven; Mary and Edith were twenty; Amy was sixteen; Nellie was fourteen and Maisie was only ten.

### **Grace Anderson**

Grace was the only one of the group to be married at this time. She was, in fact, married with two children. Grace had married Tam when she was eighteen, in 1905, and while she was still working for the Browns. They had known each other for years because Tam's sister was the housekeeper at the rectory of the Church where Grace had spent a lot of time, and which was actually situated in Kerse Lane where Grace lived with her mother. Tam stayed with his sister a lot because their mother and father were dead, and that's how Grace got to know him. They were engaged for a year and then married in church. Grace was

pregnant at the time although the baby was to die at birth. It was a quiet wedding because Grace's mother couldn't afford anything much and Grace had given her mother and family her wages through the years just so that they could survive. By this time Sarah's eyesight was failing badly and she was unable to sew any more to make ends meet.

Tam worked in the Co-op coal depot but when war broke out he went into the Air Force, leaving Grace, and the two children they had by 1914, in Falkirk. He was gone for five years. Grace found herself in a very different situation than women, like Connie, whose husband's remained at home in their usual jobs. The day Grace hoped she would never see arrived when she received a telegram saying that Tam was 'missing presumed killed' and 'his money was stopped on the dot'. It was around this time that Grace herself took up war work making shells in Klondyke's Factory. She worked nights which meant that sometimes she had to leave the children locked in by themselves although usually a neighbour looked after them for her. Grace in her turn looked after the neighbour's children while the neighbour worked during the day. Several months after receiving the news from the War office Grace did find out that Tam was still alive somewhere in Europe. This information came to light because she had mentioned her plight to Mr. Linton, a shopkeeper in Falkirk who used to hold afternoon teas for soldier's wives and children. He made it his business to get to the bottom of what had happened to Tam and pressed until he found out. Tam suffered quite badly from gas

poisoning at the very end of the war and so his homecoming was delayed while he was invalided from Germany, first to France, then to London and then to Bangour. However, he did eventually return home to his wife and his children, whom Grace said didn't know their father when he came back, and his job. Grace was quite disgusted by the fact that her man who had fought throughout the war for his country, leaving his family behind should return in the state that he did. The clothes he wore which he'd had to pay for when demobbed were lousy and had to be burned. Still, Grace was glad to have Tam back. She said that after the war and after being parted for so long they spent a lot of time going out together, usually walking, like a good many more husbands and wives whose marriages were apparently strengthened by the separation during the war years.

### **The First World War and the Other Girls**

All the other women in the group were married after the war and their lives were not disrupted by the international upheaval in the same way as Grace's. As Nellie Allan observed, "it was our mother's it worried in this generation". At the outbreak of the war Nellie was just about to leave school and in the months before she did so she and the other girls in her year were responsible for helping prepare and distribute soup for the soup kitchens in the Falkirk area. In just over a year she was to be involved in more war work but this time it was making shells and grenades in Falkirk Foundry rather than peeling carrots and onions for the soup. She left her job in the fruit shop to work



in munitions.

Mary, Edith and Nellie had brothers who went away in the war and like Tam they were away for its complete duration, probably owing to short leaves and the difficulty of transport from the south of England to Scotland, and the fact that some of them were taken prisoner. Two of Edith Archer's brothers were prisoners of war and another one died from war wounds. Her oldest brother, Graham, who was a taken prisoner had part of his gum, part of his tongue and all his teeth blown out in the fighting. Like Tam he was reported killed and it was only three months after this initial information that the family found out that he was, in fact, still alive and had been taken prisoner in Germany. From Germany he was transferred to Switzerland for surgery on his wounds and Edith's mother actually went over to see him there. One of Graham's ribs had been put into his mangled face but it didn't heal properly and so the surgeons proposed to repeat the operation only this time using a bone from his leg. However, Edith's mother refused to give them permission to do this, and in time Graham was taken to Aberdeen where his jaw was patched up with a silver wire. Edith recalled that Graham had a sort of lock in his mouth which he had to unlock and take out when he was eating. Even then he could never eat solid food. Perhaps not surprisingly brothers, boyfriends and husbands told the women of their families very little about their war time experiences which they either simply wanted to forget or considered too horrible to describe.

## Marriage

### Mary Arnott

Sandy, the man that Mary married, had been away for the complete duration of the war. They were engaged at the time but waited until after the war finished to be married. Their wedding took place in 1920 in the manse of the church when Mary was twenty-six and Sandy was twenty-eight - "working folk hadna the money f' a church wedding". Mary described her wedding outfit as being a "nice blue suit", pointing out that "not many married in white". Tea at Mary's parents house followed the ceremony - "there weren't so many receptions then". Not only did Mary and Sandy stay at her parent's home for their wedding tea, they ended up staying for the rest of their married life! Housing in Falkirk was scarce after the war and like many couples they were unable to get a house. Since Mary was the youngest child there was plenty of room at home and remaining there was the obvious thing to do. Perhaps they little realised at the time that this would lead to them becoming responsible for Sarah and Will until Sarah was seventy-seven and Will was eighty-two.

I looked after them all my married life. I just couldn't leave them --- When m' mother was ill I never grumbled. I just carried on.

## Edith Archer

Edith, who had been born in the same year as Mary, married two years later, in 1922, when she was twenty-eight and her husband, Les, was twenty-two. For women in this generation to marry men younger than themselves was unusual and to marry a man six years younger was very unusual, reversing the 'normal' order of things at the time. Edith had met Les because he lived near one of her aunts in a place called Windsor Milton and used go along on Edith's aunt's family picnics to Loch Orr. Edith and Les were engaged and then married in the manse. Echoing what Mary said, Edith remarked,

They didn't bother s' much then about church as they do now. Nearly everybody was married in the manse.

So in this respect Edith and Mary had similar experiences on marriage. However, in other ways their lives were very different, significantly because Edith and Les had their own place from the beginning of their life together.

We'd been paying rent on a house six months before we were married, a single end. We were in that for a while then we got a room 'n' kitchen before moving to Lomond Drive where we stayed for forty-five years. We were lucky in that respect, we never had to stay with anybody.

Not only did they have a house to move into on marriage but, like Connie, they were lucky enough to have the house furnished

beforehand too. They had put what money they had together and got what they could. Les's brother was a painter and he did up the house for them. They were lucky.

### **Amy Aitken**

Some weren't so fortunate. Married life for Amy and Jack Aitken began in Port Glasgow in 1921 along with the Depression. It did not start happily.

I'm sorry we did get married there because the unemployment, the strikes and the lock-outs!

Jack was a blacksmith in one of the shipyards at the time and he lost his job when he got caught up in the riveters strike. He was to remain out of work for the next six years. Eventually he received a shilling and threepence from the burroo for himself, Amy and baby Michael but for the first fourteen weeks he received no money and had to borrow money from his parents. To ease finances slightly Amy went to wash and iron "for the folks 'up the brae , the big folk". It took one day to wash and one day to iron for which she was given three shillings a day and her dinner. Besides the washing, Amy took in sewing at home, charging 8d for putting hems on curtains and a shilling for making "a wee print frock". On the days when Amy was home and could watch the baby Jack went away in the mornings digging tatties to make a bit more money.



## **Nellie Allan**

Nellie met Billy Campbell just after the war when she was introduced to him in the street by someone she worked with. Eighteen months afterwards, and following a short engagement, they were married. Edith was twenty by this time and Billy was twenty-five. Like Connie and Edith they could count their blessings because they were able to settle down with everything and were considered by their families and others to be well-off. Nellie stressed that in general it was very difficult for newly married couples to get houses and she fully realised that some people spent all their married lives with their parents, as indeed we have just witnessed in Mary's case. Nellie remembered that on her wedding day her gran, her mother's stepmother, passed on this piece of worldly wisdom obviously prominent at the time.

See that y' have decent beds, Nellie. That's the main thing. The rest can follow.

## **Maisie Agnew**

Maisie was married at twenty, the same age as Nellie four years later, in 1924. Rab, her husband, was considerably older at thirty. Maisie had known Rab since she was ten years old, he was her uncle's friend. Like so many other couples they were married at a quiet ceremony in the manse attended only by themselves and their best man and best maid. Maisie said that there were not many big weddings in those days but neither were

there many register office ones. The manse was somewhere in between it seems. Like Mary, Maisie also pointed out that there weren't so many receptions, people usually went back to their mother's for a meal for something like steak pie or cold meat and sandwiches, often ordered from the Coop. Maisie and Rab began their married life in a room but after nine months managed to get a house in Ladysmill where they remained for the next forty-one years until it was demolished.

### **Children and Married Life**

Grace, Mary, Edith, Amy, Nellie and Maisie all had children but all of them had much smaller families than their mothers.

#### **Grace Anderson**

Grace's first baby died.

M' first child was only three pounds but there were no hospitals. Y' bairns just had t' die --- Y' children were born at home, there was no maternity home, y' had t' go t' Glasgow f' that.

However quite soon after this tragedy Grace gave birth to a healthy son, James, and five years later, during which time she had a miscarriage, to a daughter, Bella. Obviously during the War while her husband was away she was free from pregnancies and more children. After he returned Grace had three more children, including Charles, her youngest son, born in 1922 when she was

thirty-five. Thinking of these three children, and Charles in particular, led Grace on to say what her general feelings on the matter were.

He must have been a mistake. I never thought I was going to have any more. The back's made f' the burden. My husband liked children very much --- Y' never ken what's before y' when y're a married woman. Y' didn't ken any better but folks are cute these days. There was no family planning or pills then. These days y' didna ken any better. The doctors were feared t' tell y' 'n' y' mother wouldn't tell y'. It was against the grain and still is. Y' just took what y' got 'n' that was all it was about. Y' didna ken any better. I wouldna have had six if I coulda helped it. Two was plenty, y' hadna the money. Everybody had about six wains. It didn't go much below that. There were plenty families of ten and twelve. But there seemed t' be work f' them.

The two children Grace had given birth to before Charles had been twin girls. Due mainly to the incompetence of the midwife and the unavailability of a doctor, one of girls had been practically strangled at birth but lived for another fifteen days and the other girl only lived two days longer. Grace said that she let the first twin lie for the two days because she knew the other one was going to die, and this way she saved expense by only having to have the doctor once. Grace was sad about her twin daughters but she was worried at the time of having them about what she would do if they did survive because she only had a room and kitchen which she didn't feel was adequate for bringing up four children.

It is rather puzzling in a way that Grace should have apparently had so little choice over the size of her family because, like Connie's mother, she was a community midwife. However, unlike Sarah she did this unceasing work entirely voluntarily.

I went oot 'n' brought bairns int' the world f' years. I hadna a certificate but I used t' go round. Twins 'n' triplets 'n' everything. I went oot wi' the nurses. I always had nurses f' friends. I did loads o' things f' them at night but I never accepted a penny. One woman bought me a pinny but I made her have it hersel'. They thought her bairn was dead because it was all torn. The birth had lasted from seven in the morning to seven at night 'n' the doctor said it was dead but I brought it round. It was a girl and she's in America now married to a doctor! I knew what t' do. The nurses had taught me. They showed y' what t' do 'n' y' did it. If anybody was hurt they always sent f' me.

Besides the midwifery just described, Grace worked in formal employment as a housekeeper after her marriage for eight years. She was allowed to take her children with her to her job; then, as we know, she went into Klondyke Foundry during the First World War; and during the Second World War, by the start of which she was fifty-two, she went back into the foundry where this time she worked with a fitter because Tam "never had a decent wage in his life".

Two of the most significant occurrences in Grace's life were to do with her children. As we have learned already, Grace had twins die almost at birth but besides this her youngest son,



Charles, was very ill as a child when the whooping cough he contracted, at the age of five, led to him having a ruptured spleen which had to be taken out. As a result of this operation he had to spend two years in The Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh. Grace went to visit him every day after her work as housekeeper. Her employer, Mr Williams, would take her and James to the bus stop to catch the bus to Edinburgh. It was some ordeal and it all meant time and money being diverted from the rest of the family.

The second thing which marked Grace's life was the fact that when her daughter Bella was married in 1935 there was a serious housing shortage. There was no alternative but to make room for the newly weds. The arrangement had its pros and cons.

Bella stayed wi' me, y' see. They hadna a house. They lived wi' me 'n' I really looked after Willy cos there was only thirteen months between him 'n' Jenny. Willy's the pride o' my life. They stayed seven years. I was glad t' see the back o' them apart from losing Willy. I had a holiday home 'n' I used t' send them all down there all the holidays. I didna get a holiday, they did. But it was a holiday f' me cos I got the house t' m'sel'. I watched the children all the time. Bella lost her first baby. They were both very ill. It was ten weeks previous. I took it and wrapped it in cotton wool, tried everything, but it died.

Grace had a lot on with her mother, her own and Bella's family, and her various jobs over the years but thankfully her husband helped a great deal, interestingly, as long as it was behind locked doors.

He helped in the house. He did everything in it. He was awf' good. He locked the door 'n' did all the work. He didn't want anybody t' come in while he was working. He scrubbed the kitchen floor and polished and dusted.

## Mary Arnott

Mary Arnott was married a year before the birth of her first child, a daughter called Louisa (1921) who was born at home, home being Mary's parent's house, of course. The baby was delivered by one of Mary's neighbours a fact which in retrospect led Mary to comment - "But it's surprising how y' get along". Mary's son, Malcolm, her last child, was born in the same circumstances a year after his sister. At this time when Mary had two of a family she could actually have got a house of her own but when her mother started crying at the thought and said how much she'd miss them Mary couldn't find it in herself to leave.

The main events of Mary's married life, apart from the deaths of her parents and her husband, had been the premature deaths of her son-in-law and her grandson. Her daughter, Louisa, had moved to live in Africa with her family but while out there her husband and son had been drowned in a boating accident. She had returned to Britain eventually with her daughter but had settled in England. Mary stayed in close contact but was no longer able herself to travel to her daughter's and was sorry that she would have to miss her granddaughter's imminent wedding because the journey would be too much for her.

## **Edith Archer**

Edith Archer, who if we remember was the same age as Mary, had a much larger family of six. Edith married when she was twenty-eight and had her first child, Ian, when she was twenty-nine. After Ian she had three more sons in quick succession, in three and a half years to be precise. Her last son, Donald, was born when she was forty. He only weighed three pounds and the doctor gave him just three days to live but he was a fit forty year old when I spoke to Edith. All Edith's sons, apart from Donald, whom she had by caesarian section in hospital, were born at home and she remembered having to spend six or seven weeks in bed after each one.

During her married life Edith had returned to Bannockburn mill three times to work, the last being in the Second World War when the mill was turned over to making government stores.

## **Amy Aitken**

Amy Aitken's first child, Abby, was born in 1922 nine months after her marriage to Jack who by this time was one of the millions thrown out of work in Scotland, and while they were still living with Amy's mother. It seems as if Amy and Jack wisely delayed having more children until after he found a job in Grangemouth. Then Gertie was born in 1928, Colin in 1933, Ellen in 1936 and Jean in 1937.

Amy's whole life had been scarred by the deaths of three of her children. Two of them, including her only son, had died within a week of each other from whooping cough. Colin, aged three, had died on the Wednesday of one week and Ellen, aged seven months, had died on the Thursday of the following week. While the children were ill they had to be nursed day and night so, 'Granny Macleod', Amy's next door neighbour cared for the older children, Abby and Gertie. The doctor who attended Amy's younger children asked if he might adopt Abby, as a companion for his wife, and presumably to relieve Amy's burden but she wouldn't hear of it, although she did seem to take the suggestion as a compliment. In 1980 Amy remarked,

We had an awful time but there was ones worse off than us. The time we lost two wains the woman next door lost four.

However, in the early thirties when the deaths had actually occurred they had led to Amy having a complete nervous breakdown from which she had never properly recovered and which had surfaced again in recent years with serious consequences for her physical health and mental well-being. Before Colin and Ellen died, Amy and Jack had decided not to have any more children but Amy was advised by an 'agony aunt' in a newspaper to have another child to help her get over the deaths of the other children and this was how her youngest daughter, Jean, came to be born.

The lives of Amy and her family were to settle down for a



while after the birth of Jean but tragedy, which was never far away from any family at this time, struck again when Gertie, who was still living at home, died from TB at the age of twenty-five in 1953.

### **Nellie Allan**

Compared to Mary and Edith, Nellie Allan had a very small family indeed, giving birth to an only son, Tim, in 1921. The main reason for her not having any more children was because she had had such a rough time at Tim's birth that Billy had insisted that they have no more children but added to this was the fact that early in the thirties Billy's small grain shop failed and Nellie said,

If the business hadna crashed it might have been different but when that happened everything just went out y' head.

Tim was born at home, initially with just a midwife and Nellie's mother present. However, two doctors had to be called because the birth proved so difficult, owing to the fact that the baby "was coming the wrong way". Nellie said that one of the doctors left her in a bad way throughout the night before calling in assistance and stressed that such things "wouldn't be allowed these days". Her rather nasty experience made her think that the modern idea of having hospital confinements was probably a good thing. Although she only had one child Nellie was very aware of the differences between pregnancy and childbirth now as compared

to then.

We didn't know anything when we were expecting, we were completely 'in the sea'. All y' were fed with were old wive's tales about don't do this, don't do that, don't eat that. They're sittin' up to ham 'n' eggs now; we couldn't get even a sip o' cold water. Y' couldn't leave y' bed 'n' put y' feet on the floor. Y' had t' get a big dose of castor oil and sit on a bed-pan. Y've no idea the changes there's been. The girls nowadays know everything. I know from my daughter-in-law. We were just in the dark 'n' y' mothers were that sad looking. The midwife shook her head. It was frightening there's no doubt about it. Lassies now know everything from the day it happens t' the day they have it. We were **completely** ignorant. I shudder at how little y' knew. Y' mother only told y' things after the baby was born. I said I knew all about it. You were embarassed 'n' y' mother was embarassed. There was nobody t' speak to. What funny wee creatures. Any knowledge we had was just tittle-tattle 'n' y' werena gettin' real stories. I can honestly say I was an ignorant girl 'n' I wouldn't like t' think anyone was like it nowadays. What a race we must have been in these days!

Nellie's life took a tragic turn when her son, Tim , was in his teens, during the early forties. He was a very active teenager, especially good at swimming, and had started work at Carron Iron Works from where he was sent on day-release to study metallurgy. Tim started to complain about pains in his back and was forced to cut down on his sporting activities. At first Nellie thought it was a strained ligament and packed Tim off to the doctor who didn't do, or say, very much it seems. The condition continued to get progressively worse but still the doctor took no specific action on the case. Nellie fought very hard until something more was done for her son by the medical profession and it was eventually discovered that Tim was

suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. He had to spend thirteen months in the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital in Edinburgh, followed by a further two and a half in a hospital near Galashiels, a situation which like the one Grace had faced before led to enormous expense and loads of travelling for his parents. This is what Nellie remembered of the Second World War - her only son's devastating illness. She summed these times up simply, by saying, "Nobody knows what y' went through". And unfortunately, despite the years of treatment, Billy was crippled for life.

Nellie was particularly proud when I met her that Tim's only son had just graduated from Heriot Watt University with a degree in accountancy and was about to enter a good job. She seemed to believe that in some way this made up for what Tim never managed to achieve owing to his illness.

In spite of her son's illness in the war years Nellie did start going out to work as a collector for some kind of company who needed women to fill the places of the men who had been conscripted. She said,

It was only in the Second World War when they needed y' that I was out. Wives didn't work in these days. It wasn't considered right.

It seems that Nellie's married life was mostly spent nursing people of her family. First it was her son and then her mother. Her mother lived until she was ninety and required a great amount of nursing in her later years, especially after she went blind.

Nellie and her mother lived in the same building but not quite next door to each other. However, when the opportunity arose Nellie approached the factor and was given permission to move to a vacant flat next to her mother. In this way she was able to attend to her mother constantly but they were both able to maintain their own households. Some years after her mother died Nellie found herself nursing her husband who suffered from cancer of the bladder for two years until he died.

### **Maisie Agnew**

Maisie Agnew only had two children, Robin and Margaret. Her son was born a year after her marriage, when she was twenty-one, and her daughter a year and a half later. Both children were born at home, without complications, by a midwife called "Old Nurse Smith". Maisie recalled these times,

I was used t' looking after children cos I'd helped my mother such a lot. It just came t' y' --- Mind you, once the family came it was a full-time job cos my husband was on shifts. He was on the railway, y' know, he was on different shifts, like from six t' two and two t' ten, and sometimes he was away f' maybe a day or two. It was the old engines, y' see, 'n' he was an engine driver. They often had t' stay out overnight, in a bothy. He worked a combination of twelve shifts.

Rab worked on the railways for forty-three years. It had its perks as well as its drawbacks. For instance Rab was entitled to free passes for the family which meant they were able to spend a fortnight's holiday every year with Maisie's brother



in Croyden, a world away these days.

The main events of Maisie's life that she talked about were the early death of her husband, who had died twenty-five years before my interview, at the age of sixty-one, and the death of her son-in-law, who had dropped dead in his forties. Maisie saw a great deal of her daughter, her two grandsons and her five great grandchildren who lived in Falkirk, and frequently saw her son and his family who had moved to Glasgow to live.

1926 MAY - GENERAL STRIKE HALTS COUNTRY BUT ENDS QUICKLY ...  
1926 NOV - HUNGRY MINERS DRIVEN BACK TO WORK ...  
1927 SOLO FLIGHT ACROSS ATLANTIC BY LINDBERGH ...  
1929 TALKIES HIT CINEMAS ...  
1929 UNEMPLOYED FROM GLASGOW MARCH TO LONDON ...  
1936 EDWARD VIII CHOOSES MRS SIMPSON RATHER THAN THRONE ...  
1937 LAST PARADE OF BRITISH EMPIRE AT CORONATION OF GEORGE IV ...

1939 OUTBREAK OF SECOND WORLD WAR ...  
1939 10% UNEMPLOYED ABSORBED BY WAR EFFORT ...  
1939 I.D. CARDS INTRODUCED ...  
1940 FOOD RATIONING STARTS ...  
1941 WOMEN CONSCRIPTED ...  
1941 WOMEN IN MEN'S JOBS AND IN FORCES ...  
1945 WAR ENDS, LEAVING 265,000 BRITISH DEAD ...

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DAUGHTERS OF THE DEPRESSION

#### Introductions

The women whose lives will unfold before us as examples of life in this generation are Mrs Bella Bolton, 68; Mrs Cissie Bell, 66; Mrs Janie Black, 65; Mrs Kate Brodie, 63; and Mrs Lucy Bremner, 56.

#### Bella Bolton

Bella Bolton was born Bella Anderson in 1911 in Falkirk. She was the daughter of Grace Anderson, the only surviving daughter. As we know from Grace's story Bella had two brothers, one three and a half years older and one ten years younger. Her mother was variously a 'community' midwife, a domestic and a munitions worker and her father worked as a coal-filler in the Co-op coal depot before going off<sup>to</sup> become a soldier in the First World War.

## **Cissie Bell**

Cissie Bell was born<sup>in</sup> Bainsford, Falkirk, in 1914 but she was born of Italian parents who had themselves originated in Naples. Cissie was the second of their four daughters. At the time of her birth both her parents worked in the small chip shop which they owned in Bainsford.

## **Janie Black**

Janie Black was born a year later, in 1915, in the village of Lauriston, not far from Falkirk. She had one brother a year younger than herself. Her mother died when Janie was only six and she didn't remember her father at all. She had never known who he was and hadn't any idea what had happened to him.

## **Kate Brodie**

Kate Brodie was born further afield in Stirling, in 1917. She had nine sisters and two brothers and she was the second eldest daughter. Her father was a coal-miner when he could get work and her mother was a cleaner in the Provost of Stirling's house, where she went two or three mornings a week.

## **Lucy Bremner**

Lucy Bremner, born in Falkirk in 1924, was also from a large family although not as large as that of Kate. Lucy had four



sisters and three brothers. She was the fourth child and second daughter. Her dad was "an ordinary working man", a bath enameller, but her mum, unlike the rest of the mothers in this generation, didn't work outside the house because she was "too busy with the family".

## Childhood

### Bella Bolton

Bella Bolton couldn't remember her childhood in great detail, she recalled having "a happy childhood" and remembered the girls she played with as a child, together with the games such as peevers and beds and skipping ropes which they played. She recollected that her mother worked in a big house as a cleaner and that she went into munitions during the war. Bella was three when the First World War started and seven before it was over but her mother working was the only thing she remembered of it. She never mentioned the fact that her father had been away all those years and neither did she mention being looked after by the neighbour. She did say that she vaguely remembered her father being out of work during depression when it was "a hard struggle cos there was no buroo money".

### Cissie Bell

Cissie Bell's childhood was scarred by the death of her

father and then her mother. Her father, Mario, was killed just after the end of the First World War while crossing a minefield and while his family in Scotland were eagerly awaiting his return in Glasgow where he had deposited the family before he went to the War, presumably because they'd be nearer to relatives there.

He'd just sent a telegram saying he was coming home 'n' m' mother had a big table, y' ken, they made all fancy stuff. We were having a do. She was that excited 'n' we were excited 'n' then we got a quick telegram saying he'd been killed.

Mario had been "a great family man", he sang and danced and played the piano besides which he never drank or smoked.

He was a good father. He liked his lassies 'n' used t' dance them about the house. He was daft on his lassies.

Cissie said that they were "full 'n' plenty" before her father died but afterwards her mother had to live off a pension and things got difficult. She recalled that her aunties, who still had ice cream shops, in Falkirk visited them in Glasgow, taking with them toys for the girls which their mother couldn't afford. Neither Bella's older sister, Netta, nor her mother kept well and so it fell to Bella to see to the main running of the house and family from the time she was five or six.

I was always working. M' mother wasna well. She never was well since m' father got killed... I always used t' help m' mother. I had an older sister but she was awf' delicate. M' mum wasna very well. In 'n' oot the hospital 'n' I was left

t' do everything ... see, m' mother was Italian 'n' couldna talk Scotch 'n' I had t' get the messages. 'N' every time she went t' the public washhouse it was always me she took. I was well-trained.

When Cissie was only eight her mother died from TB of the spine, at which point the sisters were split up and sent to live with relatives. Cissie went to Edinburgh to live with her father's brother, who had married a Scottish woman. While she liked her uncle very much she didn't get on well with her aunt who was "all f' her own daughters".

### **Janie Black**

Like Cissie, Janie Black was an orphan from a very young age. As already pointed out she never knew her father and her mother died from a gastric ulcer when Janie was six and her brother five. They went to live at their gran's where their childhood was hard and strict. Granny Taylor had to go to work in the potato fields for half a crown a day so that she could afford to bring up her grandchildren. She was very strict, "y' daren't say, 'No' to her", and if, for example, visitors dropped in the children had to sit back until they had finished their tea. And they always had to go to Sunday school.

### **Kate Brodie**

Likewise so did Kate Brodie who was brought up as a Catholic.

M' dad was Catholic 'n' m' mother was Protestant but there were never any arguments. M' mother kept her religion till the day she died and m' father. And the minister and the priest used t' come t' the house. Never any arguments. It's no very often that, y' know.

Kate's childhood began in a room and kitchen at the top of the town in Stirling but later the family moved next door to a house with three bedrooms and a kitchen. This must have been after 1926 when Kate remembers her father and the rest of them being in dire straits because he simply couldn't get work.

I still remember the 1926 strike. Well, I was just about nine at the time but I still remember it. Y' used t' have t' wear hand-me-down shoes 'n' all the rest o' it even though a dress only cost about a shilling at Nimmo's 'n' a pair of sandshoes sixpence halfpenny --- I always remember m' dad, in the strike, going away 'n' gettin' wood 'n' peat f' the fire. There was no dole. There was the Parish, what y' called the Parish 'n' y' got a line t' go to Eastwood's. It was a grocer's 'n' y' went down there 'n' that was y' rations f' a week. And there was no family allowance or anything like that. M' father used t' say t' m' mother, 'We were married forty year too soon.'

Not because of illness in this instance but because of being part of a very large family everyone in the household of Kate's childhood had to help with the house, mother and father, boys and girls, young and old. Her father helped with the children and would do much more besides, as long as nobody outwith the family saw him.



Oh, m' dad could do anything. He made soup ... the only thing he wouldna do was hang washing in the green, he would wash ... m' dad could make soup. He could cook better than any woman. I don't know if that was unusual. He had t' work, he just had t' help.

Kate's brothers did jobs like cleaning boots and helping with the coal fires but it was the girls who took care of the regular thorough cleaning of the house, especially towards the weekend.

Every Thursday night m' sister 'n' I had t' get the whole grate done. Y' know, y' had this big range 'n' then at the front of it was y' fender. It was like steel. 'N' then y' had the wooden thing t' do on top o' it 'n' y' big tongs 'n' y' poker. So every Thursday night this grate got done 'n' then it got put under the bed till Friday. 'N' it was wooden sinks, wooden tables, wooden chairs that had t' be scrubbed white 'n' y' were lucky if y' had a piece of linoleum on the floor. We used t' have linoleum actually ... but every Thursday night m' sister 'n' I had t' do that whole house from end t' end. I always remember the first Thursday I came in 'n' I wanted t' do something. M' sister said, 'Well, this is the night f' working, y' won't get out on a Thursday night'. The older y' got, y' see, the more y' got t' do. I always say 'they don't know they're born'. I mean it was black lead 'n' emery paper. It used t' take y' the whole night. Oh I hated it. I used t' loathe doing it. 'N' yet I have t' say, when it was done ... I loved t' see it when it was done.

### Lucy Bremner

Lucy Bremner, also from a large family, said much the same thing about her childhood experience of working in the house, including the mixture of dislike and satisfaction which it brought.

We all had our wee jobs 'n' y' knew y' had t' do them before y' got out t' play so y' did them ... Everything had t' be done thoroughly. There was no skippin'. We had a black-leaded grate with all chrome ... I do remember that. Y' used t' have t' black-lead. We all had our jobs t' do, everyone o' us, even the boys. One washed the dishes one night, one dried them the next, one set the table, one cleared the table. Y' helped t' clean the scullery.

While not being over keen on these jobs she loved washdays, for their atmosphere and the sense of a job well done.

Washdays I'd stand on a wee stool by the washtub with a washing board. It was great. I used t' love it. The smell of clean washing, y've no idea. And I've always liked that smell since, of fresh clothes. But the whites! Three separate washes, boiled, three separate rinses in cold, cold water 'n' then int' the sink with the blue stuff in it. It was done in a washing house outside. But oh y've no idea the rinses 'n' cleanings those clothes got.

Lucy stressed the fact that in her family "even the boys" worked because she was well aware how very different this was from the situation in her father's childhood.

Dad was one of the old school. His mother had ruined all the boys of the family. They didn't do any work at all. The women had t' do everything f' the men, even t' putting in the old-fashioned back studs. I remember having t' do that f' m' Grandpa Duffield, 'n' his cuff links, y' know. Grandpa was an ex-army man 'n' just reared his family with strict discipline. But it wasn't a boy's job t' do this 'n' it wasn't a boy's job t' do that. Anything in the house was a girl's job ... But that actually didn't pass on to our family because m' mum's family were very different.

The children not only used to help their mother and father in their own home they also used to help their mother's sister Aunt Jessie, whom they called Nanny, and who lived nearby on Alma Street.

She was so houseproud it was unbelievable. Y' took y' shoes off on the doorstep. Oh ay, 'n' Uncle George went down the garden t' smoke his pipe cos he wasna allowed t' smoke it in the house. But we used t' go up 'n' help Nanny. She'd all them brass stair rails, y' know.

This wasn't the only link with Aunt Jessie and Uncle George, however. There was a much stronger one in the form of Lucy's elder sister, Janet.

Well, Aunt Jessie never had a family, couldn't have a family --- She was financially secure because Uncle George Cooper had a joiner's and undertaker's business. There was only the two o' them 'n' m' Grandpa Duffield who was still living at that time. So, mum had Malcolm 'n' then she had Janet, then she had Ian, then she had this Bessie, as she called her. Well, Malcolm and Ian both took whooping cough 'n' so did the baby. Janet didn't. So, Aunt Jessie took Janet out of the way. By this time mum's got three 'n' I'm on the way. Now Bessie developed pneumonia 'n' she died which was an awful blow t' m' mum. So she was left with Malcolm 'n' Ian 'n' I was just about on the scene. So, Aunt Jessie told mum to wait until after she'd had the baby. She was so desperate t' hold ont' Janet. Apparently m' dad wasn't too happy about it but m' mum said, 'Well look it's not as if she's going t' be miles away 'n' it'll give her chance t' get a better life, y' know. M' dad didn't approve, didn't approve at all but as Aunt Jessie said, 'Well, look, Cyril, Rachel can't cope just now. She jusy can't cope. Give her chance t' get on her feet after she has her other baby 'n' then we'll talk it over 'n' see how y' feel. Well by this time Janet was settled. And they kept her



beautifully dressed, really, voile dresses, picture hats, y' know, you name it. 'N' they had their own garden with apple trees 'n' what have y'. So anyway there were no rows about it, m' dad didn't have the heart t' take the bairn away from them. And Janet was always coming down, y' know. They knew they'd be able to keep in touch 'n' they thought she'd have a better chance than the rest o' us. So that's how Janet came t' be with Nanny as we called her ... We weren't jealous, not a bit. In fact, I think really we had a happier childhood than Janet had. Her's was more of a strict upbringing 'n' a bit lonely I would say. Not in the summer maybe when she was out to play with other people but when the winter weather came she was just there with Aunt Jessie 'n' Uncle George Only grown-ups.

To return to looking at the work which children were involved in and were aware of it is significant that Lucy Bremner, like Maisie Agnew in the previous group of women we looked at, frequently had occasion to go to the factory where her father worked and so could well appreciate the nature of his employment.

It was a hard job. Y' know, they used t' have t' wear masks and, of course, they were working in and about a furnace. 'N' I used t' have t' take a box with his sandwiches in it 'n' his flask f' his tea round every afternoon after I came from school. They made a big fuss o' y' in the foundry, y' know. Y'd see the gate-man 'n' he took y' down t' where the furnace was 'n' kept y' well back, of course. They watched ... they were pretty good wi' their safety regulations. But they used t' let me go down 'n' have a wee blether wi' m' dad before he was finishing his shift. I saw everything. They sprayed the enamel - it went int' this huge red-hot furnace and then it came out on rollers 'n' they did something else 'n' then they sprayed it again. It was iron baths, of course, in those days, y' see.

Lucy talked in great detail about the time of her childhood



and I think it is worth taking a look at something else which she said about her family because it seems to have been important to her own future development besides linking up with something that Alice Clark said. This was the quite striking difference between the paternal and maternal sides of her family. In connection with work in the house I have already quoted the piece about her father's family which stressed the discipline side of life and, if we remember, at the end of that Lucy stressed that her mother's family were "very different".

Grandpa Duffield, m' mother's father, was a moulder. It was a hard, hard job but he was also a musician. He taught the cello 'n' he taught the violin 'n' he had dancing classes, ballroom dancing 'n' Highland dancing. That man worked himself t' the bone f' his family. He had six sons 'n' three daughters. Now they started off in a single room but they built private houses on Alma Street 'n' Grandpa Duffield worked 'n' worked till he got a house in Alma Street ... he did about half a dozen jobs really, y' know, with his dancing 'n' his music 'n' what have y'. I mean he never had a minute. He loved it. And he was a perfect wee gent. He really was. He was small made but so smart, so well-turned out, with his cane, y' know, 'n' his gloves. A right gentleman. I mean anybody speaking to him would never o' dreamt he was a moulder.

Lucy also recalled paying the grandparents of each side of the family regular visits, with her brothers and sisters who were around at this particular time - two of them would go to her mother's relatives and two to her father's and the next week they'd swop round. The visits were not made with an equal enthusiasm because by this time Grandpa Duffield was living with Aunt Jessie, whose predilections for order and tidiness we

already know about and which contrasted sharply with the atmosphere of her father's mother's house.

Malcolm and I used t' go together 'n' Ian 'n' Marjory used t' go together - every Sunday. Now one Sunday y' went round t' Grannie Elder's 'n' the next Sunday y' went t' Aunt Jessie Cooper's on Alma Street. Now Grannie Elder lived in a tenement as well as next to a pub. Y' went through the pen 'n' up the stairs, a wee covered staircase, but there was only her house there so she had her own toilet 'n' she had attics. Now Grannie Elder's house, that was m' dad's folks, it had yon hairy horse hair seats. I remember them. Oh, they were jaggy! They were most uncomfortable to sit on. But y' could go round t' Grannie Elder's ... now she wasn't nearly as particular about cleanliness ... I mean she wasn't m' mother's standards of cleanliness if y' know what I mean. Topsy-turvy kind o' thing but an awf' lived in kind o' house. 'N' we used t', each Sunday, "It's my turn t' go t' Grannie Elder's", "No it's no, you went last week, so y're going t' Aunt Jessie's".

Like Kate, Lucy enjoyed her time at school and had been seriously thinking of staying on until illness and financial pressures in the family forced her to change her mind. Her mother had been ill throughout her final year at school, with a blocked tear duct that turned poisonous with the result that she was admitted to Glasgow Eye Infirmary, leaving Lucy in charge of the house. This was quite a job because with her brother Malcolm working as a hairdresser, her bother Ian working in the Co-op and her dad working at the enamelling there were a lot of white overalls to wash.

My school report said, "Lucy is a hard worker. She does her best but lower marks this term due to the fact that she lost so many months schooling". That's when m' mother was ill. Well, I just

couldna go t' the school. In fact, I used t' run up 'n' sit the exam 'n' come running back home 'n' I had had no sort of tuition or preparation f' the exams. I still got through them but with lower marks compared to what I used t' have ... I knew things were strained at home financially. I mean I could see and I knew that mum wasn't keeping well herself. Y' know, this had taken an awful lot out of her, this illness, 'n' I thought if I could be earning something it would help ... I left school at fourteen 'n' mum was angry cos I'd just been moved from a B class to an A class but I mean I was seeing by this time the struggling she was having t' make ends meet.

We'll find out what happened to Lucy when she left school further on.

## Adolescence

### Bella Bolton

Bella left school at fourteen to help her family out financially. Bella had got on well at Victoria Primary School, being especially bright at arithmetic. She still remembered proudly being the only one in her class ever to get all the mental arithmetic exercises correct. She liked school and wanted to go further.

So I sat the bursary and passed. I went to the High School from when I was twelve till I was fourteen but then I started work. At that time y' just started work whenever y' could f' the sake o' helping wi' the money.

She went straight from school to the Falkirk Hosiery where

she was to stay until she married. It was all women that worked in the hosiery except for the manager. Bella was an overlooker there. She measured sleeves and such like to make sure they were the correct length and picked up stitches or darned cardigans and pullovers. Bella said that the work wasn't hard and she loved it. Hours were eight to five and wages were "ordinary for the time". Bella's mother received her wages and gave her daughter pocket money, a system which was still as common place as it had been in the earlier generation.

### **Cissie Bell**

Cissie Bell worked as an assistant in her uncle's baker's shop in Edinburgh for a while when she left school "for 7/6 a week 'n' a bag o' cakes" but it wasn't long before she went off to the Italian community in Glasgow where she found work as a cleaner.

I was always working, on m' knees doing scrubbing floors 'n' that.

### **Janie Black**

As soon as she left school Janie Black went into service for five shillings a week which was paid monthly. She said it was the "only work y' could get then". Janie worked for the minister in Mereside Place, Falkirk, "cleaning the house and going messages". She walked every day from her granny's in Lauriston to Falkirk because she was not required to live in although she



had to be there from about 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. It was a long day and she only got Sunday afternoon off but she said that the work wasn't hard and she "thought nothing of it".

### Kate Brodie

Like Janie, Kate loved primary school, did well in her education and wanted to continue with it.

I was the best pupil in the Catholic school. I had 98 out of 100. There was no such thing as . . . secondary schools were just starting 'n' there was no secondary schools till then. There was just the primary, the qualifying, 'n' then the final examinations, y' know, the bursary. Actually I sat the bursary and I had 98 out of 100 for it. M' one ambition in life was t' be a school teacher. I was playing schools f' when I was five. I was crazy t' be a school teacher 'n' when I won the bursary y' could get t' the secondary school. I was about twelve at this time. But, anyway, the nearest hand Catholic secondary school was Kirkintilloch. We went on a special bus but I was travel sick. I did it f' six months 'n' put up with being ill but then m' mother told the canon I'd have t' leave. I could have transferred t' the High School in Stirling but y' had t' pay. So I was just thirteen and a half when I had t' leave school 'n' go t' work. It was a great shame. That's what I say t' Garry, m' grandson, "Y' don't realise how lucky y'are". He got the chance I never got. But I mean there were twelve o' us 'n' m' father wasn't working so I had t' leave school 'n' get a job. M' mother just couldna afford t' keep me on at school. 'N' I mean there was no such thing as dole money or anything then. No, I was very disappointed. Oh, I'd have loved t' have been a school teacher.

When Kate Brodie left school she also went into service. She was paid six shillings a week which she gave to her mother who in turn gave her sixpence back for pocket money.

But the people I worked for were very good. They were always slipping y' tuppence 'n' that was a lot o' money then. And I've always been a saver.

In fact, Kate saved enough tuppences to buy herself a racing bike. She was proud of the achievement. Before long, however, Kate moved on to take a job as an assistant in a wet fish shop in Stirling, a family business, the day-to-day running of which she essentially became responsible for.

When I first went in it was the mother, daughter 'n' son. Y' know they were elderly 'n' the mother died 'n' left Miss Foster 'n' Mr Foster. 'N' he was deaf 'n' I had always t' be there f' the phone 'n' the books. It was slates they had, y' see. They didn't depend on passing trade. It was a high-class sort o' shop 'n' y'd phone in y' order, y'd come in 'n' get y' order 'n' y' got it marked on a slate. Then Miss Foster would make the books up at night. They killed turkeys 'n' chickens on the premises too. The first day I was terrified out m' life, the next day I was killing them m'sel'.

The wet fish shop was also a 'family business' in another way because Kate's mother had in fact worked in this job before her marriage and when Kate eventually left "about three sisters at m' back all went in after that".

### **Lucy Bremner**

Lucy Bremner's first job was also as a shop assistant, in this instance in a drapery shop. She got the job on the spare of the moment while returning home from Dunn and Wilson's the

bookbinder's where she'd been with her school friend who'd been for a job there. While walking past Turner's the Drapers she saw a notice in their window 'Girl Wanted. Apply Within.' She went in to enquire from Bessy Black, who worked there, what it was about and came out with a job that started the next day. Lucy was thrilled and pleased with her enterprising move but her mother was not impressed.

I didn't have time t' stop 'n' think what mum's reaction would be, y' see, so when I got down t' the house she was just coming in, she'd been t' the Co-operative. 'N', of course, she was going through the close that separated the two buildings 'n' I'm coming, "Mam, Mam! I've got a job, I've got a job! I've t' start tomorrow." 'N' I was all excited. "My goodness, where have y' got a job about?" She was almost struck dumb, y' know. "Mrs. Turner's of Princes Street. It's a draper's shop. Half a crown a week, mam!" Oh, I was thrilled t' bits, over the moon. So, mum said, "Well, I'm no awfully happy about it. I'm really not. I would rather y' got back t' the school". I said, "Well, what for, mam?" I says, "'N' what am I going t' do when I leave the school?" I'd no great ambitions. I said, "'N' it's half a crown a week that y're not gettin' now, 'n' I think I'll like it. 'N' I'd be at home all the school holidays 'n' I'd be costing y' 'n' then I'd be costing y' new clothes f' whatever clothes needed replaced f' going back t' school. 'N' y've still got Jessie, June 'n' Andy t' put t' school".

Lucy's mother talked the whole thing over with her father and they decided to let their daughter have her own way, on the basis that the Turners were "nice people". Lucy liked her job in the drapery very much particularly because she wasn't at all shy and loved meeting people. After a couple of weeks her pay went up to 4/6 and before too long up to 6/-, and at Christmas Mrs



Turner gave her "a lovely pink dress" from the shop. However, it was at Christmas time that Lucy decided to leave the Turner's after about six months there to go and work in the dispatch section of the Co-operative bake-house. The main attraction of this job was the pay which at fifteen shillings a week was more than double the pay at Turner's. However, the job was attractive in many ways besides. One of Lucy's best friends already worked in dispatch and her brother, Ian, worked in the bake-house; the hours were "marvellous", starting at 7.30 a.m. and finishing at 3.30 and the atmosphere was "hearty".

I loved that job, I really did. It was such a happy atmosphere, it really was. Y' went away t' y' work singing all the time. 'N' it wasna hard. No, I loved m' work.

Unfortunately Lucy's time in this seemingly perfect job was brought to an abrupt end when the Co-operative Women's Guild objected to two members of the same family, Lucy and Ian, working in the same place. Because Ian was the man learning a trade it was Lucy who was asked to leave. She was upset about losing the actual job since she liked it so much but more upset because of the general employment situation at the time.

Jobs were becoming very scarce. Oh, I was really upset about being unemployed at that time when jobs were scarce because they were sending them t' this Trades School just along from the ABC. I wasn't a snob but y' saw them coming out smoking their cigarettes 'n' using foul language, as tough as nails. 'N' I was breaking my heart 'n' I said t' mum, "Oh, mum, I'll never go t' that school. I'm not going t' go". I mean they couldn't have all been like that, it was just unfortunate it was just



the odd ones 'n' the impression y' got was that they were all like that.

However, Lucy had no real need to worry because in her indomitably confident style she talked her way into a job as manageress of a small egg shop which Les Gow, the baker, was opening. Once again Lucy had seen the job advertised in the shop window while out with her mother and since Les Gow knew Rachel, her mother, he decided to let Lucy have a go with his new shop.

I was happy as Larry here, opening this shop and locking it and seeing everything was spotlessly clean . . . He didn't pay as much as the Co-operative. I think I got twelve shillings or twelve and six but for the half crown at least I was in a job, y' know.

Lucy must have been quite impressive in her new position because Mrs Long, the owner of another baker's shop in Falkirk, continually went into the egg shop to try to tempt Lucy to work for her. Eventually, Lucy had a word to Mr Gow about this and he was quite relieved because he had been thinking about closing the egg shop since he had discovered that he couldn't really afford to keep two shops going. So, Lucy moved jobs once more, again to work and people that she really liked.

There was the supervisor and May and myself. May's still a friend of mine, she lives in Bainsford. There was no much room behind the counter but it was a nice kinda job, selling cakes 'n' puttin' them in boxes, y' know, tea bread in bags 'n' loaves 'n' everything. It all smelt lovely, y' know, pies 'n' what have y'.

This time Lucy stayed in her job for a year (1940) until she came to the conclusion that the Long family while professing to be great Christians were actually very hypocritical and mean; the sort of people who watched their staff all the time in case they were up to no good. Telling her mum and sister, Jessie, Lucy said,

Y' know, I really enjoy working with May and with Isla Carlton. We've got a rare happy shop. But whenever Mrs. Long or her son come in y' could cut the atmosphere with a knife. It's dreadful. I get the impression they're watching y' every time y're at the till. And t' me that's not nice, they should know if they can trust their staff or not. I don't like it 'n' the sooner I'm out that shop the better.

On hearing this Jessie informed Lucy that her boss, Miss Macklintoach, at the Household Supplies office, was looking for credit collectors to take up jobs of men who'd gone into the Forces. Lucy instructed her younger sister to speak for her and the very next day Miss Macklintoach was round at the house. At first she wasn't too keen on employing Lucy because she thought she was too young to take on the responsibility of handling a lot of money plus book-keeping and bank statements but Lucy was confident she could cope and said so in no uncertain terms. She started the following week, doing the Bonnybridge area. She stressed how "marvellous" the pay was for a young girl. While on the job, however, Lucy was called up and had to make the decision as to whether to go into a munitions factory or enter the Forces. She chose the latter and her mum took over her Household Book.

## Marriage and the Second World War

Being slightly older than Lucy all the other women in the group were married by the time the war started.

### Bella Bolton

Bella Bolton was married in 1935 at the age of twenty-five. She said that "most people didn't marry young in these days, most people waited till they were older". She had known her husband for years but they 'met', in the sense of they started courting, at the dancing which was Bella's main preoccupation as a teenager. She "loved it". Bob was two years older than Bella. They were engaged after three months and married three months after that. The marriage was in Church but it was a small affair, the only big thing about it being the cake. The ceremony was followed by tea at Bella's mother's, Grace's. Bella said that most couples followed this pattern because neither they nor their parents had much money.

Then y' had t' do everything in a quiet way but now y' can make a big splash.

It wasn't only money that was short in these days, houses were too, and Margaret and Bob ended up staying with Grace for seven years until they got a council house in the early forties. By this time Bella had two children and was expecting her third.

Bella, Bob and their children had lived in one bedroom while Mr and Mrs Anderson lived in the other. As we know from Grace, Bella and her family always went down to her mother's holiday hut at Port Seton in the summer leaving Bella and Tam to some semblance of peace at least for a few weeks. The holiday was quite a family affair because one of Bella's aunts also had a hut there and one of her cousins a caravan.

Bob worked as a moulder in the moulding shop of Cockburn's Foundry on Dalderse Avenue. His actual job was ramming the baths. The money was good but the work was hard. He'd gone into the job because he was one of a family of ten and the whole aim in life had been to find well-paying employment.

### **Cissie Bell**

Despite what Bella said about the age of marriage for members of this generation, Cissie Bell was married very young, at the age of seventeen. Hamish, her husband, had been a friend of the uncle Cissie lived with in Edinburgh and used to spend a good deal of time at the house as well as going to the trotting races with Cissie and her uncle. Cissie said of Hamish - "that's the first man I ever went out wi' 'n' that's the man I married". They were married in a register office, the affair being particularly low key because Cissie was rejected by her family for marrying a man who was a Scot and a Protestant. Despite the family wrath which never abated Cissie and Hamish had a very happy, even charmed married life. They were together constantly



for they both worked incredibly hard in the grocer's shop which they owned, until Hamish very sadly and very suddenly died at the age of forty-six from a stroke.

### Janie Black

Janie Black, wed in the same year as Cissie, was also very young, being only nineteen although Joe, her husband, was twenty-seven. Unlike Bella, and indeed most young women at this time, Janie didn't go out very much and never went to the dancing. Her major past-time was going to the pictures and it is not surprising that it was here where she met Joe, who worked there and initially won her heart by giving her free passes to get in.

Janie and Joe were married in the manse because "y' couldna afford big weddings then" although they did have "a right reception in a hall". She also remembered how much she paid for her outfit - 2/11 for the frock, 6d for the stockings, 1s for the shoes and £1 for the coat. Janie was two months pregnant.

As already indicated the housing situation in the area was pretty desperate and so Janie and Joe had no alternative but to live with her granny where they stayed for two years until they were given a miner's house in Shieldhill since Joe had moved into the mines. They stayed in this house for fourteen years until Joe was forced to leave the pit suffering from black damp and pleurisy. He went instead to work in the brickworks in Glen

Village. Here he had to work seven days a week on a shift basis but he received what him and Janie considered to be good pay, £30 a week. (1951) Janie said that she didn't work after she was married and qualified it with the usual statement, "y' didna work in these days after y' were married". She conceded that actually life was not a struggle and as an explanation went on to say "if y' were stuck y' made a plate o' soup".

### Kate Brodie

As a teenager Kate Brodie was in a cycling club and frequently went on rallies with it, on the racer she had bought from her wages. One day while she and her friend, Lynsey, were on their way to a rally in Edinburgh it started to pelt with rain when they reached Larbert Cross. Fortunately Lynsey had a cousin who lived there and so they went to her house for a cup of tea until the weather cleared. It was here that Kate first met Wilf, the boy who was to become her husband, his brother was married to Lynsey's cousin. Wilf and his brother worked at Cockburn's Foundry where they'd been since they were fourteen (their father worked in Falkirk Foundry). Wilf was a bath enameller there. Like Maisie and Lucy, Kate was well acquainted with work in the foundry and provided a graphic description of this man's world.

If y'd seen what it was like, the bath enamelling. Oh, it was like ... y' know ... y've seen these huge furnaces on the television, y' know, how they melt things doon. Well, it was a brick furnace, a great brick furnace, and it had this door that came down. Everything was operated, y' know. And they were just black baths they put in and they heated

them till they were white hot. And it was powder enamel they worked with not liquid. It was powder and it was like a strainer y' had. I always remember the first time I went into the foundry and saw him. He came out and I thought, 'My God, Wilf, y're like an old man!' And he had on like painter's overalls, just them and nothing else, just his white singlet underneath and his wee breeks. He had these on and the painter's jacket on top and a split hat. They had t' wear a hat. And he had a white thing right up t' there, a white handkerchief right up t' there. All y' could see was the white at the top o' his eyes. And he was white from head t' foot. He says, "Come on in", and there was this bath and y' took this bath out and then y' sanded. They had ... he was the first duster. At first he was a second duster and then he was a first duster. The first duster did the insides o' the baths and they just went roond aboot like this wi' this ... it was like a strainer, y' know, but it had attachments on it 'n' everything. And then the second duster went roond the rims 'n' everything. They did this while the bath was white hot and then they had t' put it back in again t' fuse it. And then take it oot again and leave it till it cooled. And they used t' deal wi' thirty baths a shift. And I used t' say t' him ... there were four shifts going at a time ... I says, "My God, where d' y' send all the baths, Wilf?" They sent them abroad 'n' everything. One o' m' brother-in-laws was a miner and when he came up one day and he saw Wilf enamelling a bath he said, "Wilf, I would rather goo doon the pit a thousand times as stand 'n' do what y're doing". He would rather go doon the pit a thousand times than do what Willie was doin'! But Wilf liked it. He was used to it. He was never doing anthing else.

Kate and Wilf were married in the manse.

They don't know they're born these days. I had one new coat I think from when I left school t' when I got married. And then when I did get married I'd got my own rig-out t' pay for, Wilf's rig-out t' pay for 'n' everything we had we had t' take on a debt.

As if this state affairs wasn't bad enough they'd only been

married three weeks when Wilf got his books. Cockburn's had been taken over and he was made redundant. From then he was on the 'buroo' for one and a half years.

On her marriage Kate had moved from Stirling to Falkirk which is where Wilf was from and she wasn't keen on the place, in fact, she hated it. The situation they found themselves in at the beginning of their married life didn't help matters. They were staying in a room of Wilf's brother's.

He was away all day for a job 'n' there was me just stuck in. Women just didna work then; women didna work. And here I was the whole day till Wilf came back and oh, I hated this, just hated it. Many's the time I was gonna go back t' Stirling again but I always said then "As long as I had fingers I would never want again". And I worked from then till I had t' stop. I mean it wasna m' man's fault he couldna get a job because that's one thing about his family, there's not an idle one among them.

Kate got a job on the Buttercup van which as its name suggests was a dairy van that went to different districts every day selling butter, cheese and other dairy produce. Interestingly, when she did leave the job her brother was taken on to replace her. Until this time her father had kept the brother in the house for two years to prevent him going down the pit.



## **The Second World War**

By the time the Second World War broke out Bella, Cissie, Janie and Kate had been married for several years and, as we shall learn in more detail in the next section, some had already started their families. All spoke about the War to a certain extent, except for Cissie, although not as much as one might have expected.

### **Bella Bolton**

Bella Bolton's husband, Bob, was away in the army for five years although he was never actually out of the country because he was blind in one eye. Their son, Graham, was fifteen months when Bob went away and their daughter, Charlotte, was born in the September after he went away in June. During the War Bella worked part-time in Dunn and Wilson's for two years. Graham and Charlotte, who were quite young at this stage, went to a local nursery school run voluntarily by a Miss Gray-Buchanan, whom Bella described as an "angel". Miss Gray-Buchanan apparently had two degrees and lived in a large house in Polmont but chose to run this nursery in Meadow Street, Falkirk.

### **Janie Black**

Janie Black also worked during the War but she worked in Nobel's factory on munitions. Because she had children by this time she wasn't forced to work but she did so because of the

money, six pounds a week, "that was big money". She got work as soon as the War started. Her actual job was making detonaters and boosters which was clean but dangerous work. One girl she worked besides was blown up. However, despite her description of it as clean just as Wilf had turned out from his work white Janie came out yellow, "pure yellow", from the powder she worked with. She didn't know what the powder was but it would presumably have been TNT. It was mainly women that Janie worked with in the factory although it was men who carried away the finished baskets of work. Janie worked shifts and so did Joe who was still in the pit at this time and therefore in a reserved occupation. It worked out that one of them would look after the children through the night while the other was at work and then they'd swop at six in the morning. If they both happened to be working during the day on day shift or back shift then the neighbours would watch the children. Janie said that she liked night shift best because there wasn't usually a lot to do and when they'd finished what there was to do they were allowed to go home. This was the last job that Janie ever had. She left it in 1945 when she fell pregnant with her last child, Alison. She wasn't too bothered about giving up outside employment because she had always been of the opinion that being in the house was much better than being at work.

Kate Brodie      Brodie

Kate also worked throughout the War. Wilf who was twenty-

two when the War broke out was in the Terri's and so he was one of the very first to be called up. As he went off Kate said to her sister, "Surely they're not expecting him to be away six months". He ended up being away for six years!

Wilf came home on leave on 10th December 1939 'n' he went back on 18th 'n' I never saw him again until 13th May 1945.

Wilf and Kate's brother were both taken prisoners of war and the only contact Kate had with them was by letter. She was allowed to write two letters a week, so one night she wrote to Wilf and the next night to Sonny. Kate heard from Wilf pretty regularly.

He was ... as I say ... he could put his hand to anything. And he wasna like m' brother ... he was a prisoner o' war in a camp where there were thousands, y' know, 'n' they just had t' take what they could get. Mind you, Sonny was lucky cos he didna smoke or anything 'n' he used t' barter his cigarettes t' the Germans f' food. Well, Wilf he was up in a farm away up in Poland 'n' there was only eleven of them 'n' he was the head man 'n' they used t' get a lot o' things that other ones didna. I mean like he was in charge o' the pigs a lot 'n' he used t' slaughter a pig 'n' hens 'n' chickens. See they'd all this sort o' thing that other people didna get.

Throughout the time that Wilf and Sonny were away Kate's father was of the following opinion,

M' dad always used t' say, at Christmas "The boys'll be home f' the holidays" 'n' at the end o' the holidays it was always, "The boys'll be home at Christmas".

Kate herself said,

I always thought I'd see him again. He said it was rough. He very rarely speaks about being a prisoner o' war. Neither him nor my brother speak much about it. At least he came home. I mean I'll bet there was hundreds that got sent away in different wars 'n' never came back. But I hope t' God there's no another war. If there is it'll no be anything like the last one.

When Wilf went off to the War Kate didn't stay in Falkirk, although she went back every Sunday to see her mother-in-law, she moved back to her mother's in Stirling, taking her two young children with her. Her daughter, Kate, was nearly four and her son, Andrew just three months. She returned home and returned to her old job in the wet fish shop. Her mother looked after Kate and Andrew while she went to work full-time. She pointed out that it was useful working in a shop during the War because it worked like so,

During the War if y' worked in a shop you wanted something 'n' I gave it t' y' 'n' you gave me something, y' see. 'N' there was a fruit shop, a fish shop, a bakery, 'n' we all gave each other something, y' see. M' mother never knew what it was t' want during the War. I could get anything.

Apart from the fact that Wilf was away for so long which, of course, was bad enough plus the fact that at one point Kate Jnr. nearly died from peritonitis, Kate did not suffer unduly during these years for she enjoyed being back home in Stirling and



working in the shop but she summed them up by saying,

Y' just feel it's a piece o' y' life that y'll never make up. I mean, y' might o' had more children, y' know.

### Lucy Bremner

While Bella, Cissie, Janie, and Kate were contending with war work, children and, in three cases, absent husbands Lucy Bremner was away in the Forces although her first experiences of the War had arisen before call up. Her elder brother, Malcolm, whom she'd been quite close to was killed on 4th Decmeber 1940 while Lucy was working at Long's. Before the War he'd been in the Royal Air Force Reserves with the result that when the War was "suddenly declared he just had to pack his things and go right away". He'd been home for his 21st birthday on 24th November when they'd had a tea in the house for everyone followed by dancing at the ice-rink for the young ones. He went back to his post as wireless operator on 2nd December and was killed on the 4th. The family received a letter from him, quickly followed by a telegram informing them of his death. They all broke their hearts.

It was an awful blow t' m' mother, losing her first born ... I'll never forget the first look I got of m' mum because she was always a proud looking woman 'n' always clean 'n' tidy ... her hair was actually standing on end. I've never seen anything ... it was like a witch ... She was a silent woman, she wasn't an exhibitionist. She kept her grief to herself 'n' she knew she had a family still alive. She knew she had to keep going.

At this time Jessie was in her early teens, Iris was about nine and Andy just six. Lucy's mother had to keep the household going single-handed really because her father was away during the week at Hillington doing war work. He only came home at weekends which certainly had some advantages, especially for Lucy who was a teenager at the time and loved dancing. She "got away with more than she might have done" had father been around more.

Besides the death of Malcolm bringing the War home to her Lucy also had to go on fire-watching duty for the Household Stores when she started there. The employees had to take it in turns to stay in the office overnight in case any bombs came that way. They never did and basically the girls had a rather good time, particularly Lucy because she was always on duty with her sister, Jessie. Eventually, as already mentioned Lucy went into the Forces and her mother took over at Household Supplies. She joined the ATS in 1943 and was posted to Dalkeith. While here receiving basic training she volunteered to work on instruments like the height finder and radar, whereupon she was posted to Greenock, then to Aberdeen and then to Hornsea.

I wasna too happy about that. I felt, "Oh, gosh!  
How far away am I going?"

But her next posting was to be still further away from Falkirk and home for she was sent to join the pay corps in Bournemouth. It was a fifteen hour journey to get back to Scotland. However,

as confident as ever Lucy soon settled in, enjoying the life and the company. She did well in her work in Bournemouth and was thought very highly of by her superiors. She was made a corporal and at the end of the War was asked to stay on, being told that her third stripe was on its way. However, Lucy had been away by this time for three and a half years which was long enough, "time to go back and become a member of my own family again". She was demobbed on 11th November 1946.

Returning to Falkirk, Lucy discovered that there wasn't much in the job line as far as she could see. However, as luck would have it her younger sister, Iris, was working by this time and in a very useful place - the Employment Exchange. It wasn't too long before Iris informed Lucy of a receptionist's job at the industrial hostel in Lauriston Bridge. She successfully applied for the job and "thoroughly enjoyed it". She had to live in but it was very near home and she went back to her mother's almost every evening.

After a while she was transferred as bookkeeper to the industrial hostel in Cowdenbeath and on her first day here she bumped into the man whom she was to marry nine months later. Stan was a miner staying in the hostel. Not surprisingly, Lucy started spending a lot more time in Cowdenbeath than she had of late so she had to tell her mother about Stan and decided to invite her through to meet him. She hadn't taken Stan home and didn't invite her dad for the meeting because he didn't like Poles after one had treated his sister very badly in a War-time

relationship. However, in the end dad ended up going to the arranged meal at the Crown Hotel, Cowedenbeath and him and Stan got on fine. Lucy and Stan where married in July 1949 at the register office in Granton, Edinburgh where Lucy been transferred as bookeeper to another hostel. Immediately they were married Lucy stopped working because "Stan was the type that didn't like his wife working".

Women didna work at that time. When y' got married y' were supposed t' look after y' husband. That was what happened in my day.

We will learn presently of how Stan's 'noble' sentiments and Lucy's bowing to the prevailing norms of the time came unstuck in practice. Suffice it to say for the moment that at the beginning of married life Lucy and Stan were reasonably happy. They lived for a year and a half in a room of the digs that Stan lived in in Crosshill until just after the birth of their first child they got "a nice wee house" in the miner's row in Glencraig.

### **Children and Married Life**

Apart from Lucy, who had quite a funny tale to relate, the women of this generation didn't talk very much about childbirth.

### **Bella Bolton**

Bella Bolton had three daughters and one son that survived



but her first born had died because it couldn't feed properly. Bella "couldn't believe" the death. She had been taken into hospital to have the baby because it was discovered that she had a cyst which if it burst would kill mother and child. All her subsequent children were born in hospital without any problems. Her youngest daughter, Janis, was born when she was thirty-seven.

### Cissie Bell

Cissie Bell's first child, a son, also died although not at birth but when he was four years old from meningitis. Cissie didn't have her next child, Cissie, until she was twenty-seven but from then on she was having<sup>a</sup> baby almost every year while continuing to work right through.

And I worked all m' days in that shop 'n' I was having babies one after another and the customers said, "Oh, Mrs Bell, y're no up already! That's no good t' y'." But I just wanted t' get on.

In fact, Cissie had a very large family, fourteen children in all, of which four died. Her youngest son was born when she was going through the initial stages of the menopause.

He's a change of life baby. They say it's good t' have a change of life baby. They say it clears all y' insides out.

Despite the fact that Cissie had so many children and had them all at home, apart from the first one, she never got used to

the experience.

No, I was always frightened t' go through that again, every time, oh ... it was big babies I had all the time.

And although she gave birth to so many children at home and although she was very close to her husband she said, as Norah had done, that he had never been present at any of the births.

Oh no. It would have been embarrassing. It was the way I was brought up with m' mother.

Because of the way she'd been brought up Cissie didn't have a clue about childbirth right up until the time she actually gave birth.

I was shocked where it came from. I thought it came out the side! M' mother wouldn't let me talk about things like that. I was a bit wild as a kid 'n' while on her death bed she'd made me promise to 'look after myself'. That's all she said but I knew what she meant. They all thought I would make a mistake but it was m' sister who made the mistake 'n' she was the oldest.

### **Janie Black**

Janie Black had six children altogether but one of her's died from silent pneumonia at the age of nine months. Janie was naturally very upset about this and started smoking through nerves. The children that survived were born in the following years - Sheila 1935, Richard 1937, Andy 1942, Liz 1944, June

1946, from when she was twenty until she was thirty-one. All her children were born at home.

It wasna a right nurse y' had but what we called a midwife. 'N' there had t' be a doctor there. The midwives weren't trained they only went out 'n' did it. Old Cockburn was one of the midwives. She had a chemist shop in a room of her house too. Y' had t' pay a pound f' the midwife 'n' two pounds for the doctor. We were in a club when Joe was in the pit.

### Lucy Bremner

Lucy was twenty-six when she had her first child, Pauline, in December 1950. She remembered it well!

It was pandemonium I'll tell y' when I had Pauline. I'll never forget how I was dressed. I'd been going f' about six weeks with false labour. Now it was m' first baby 'n' m' mum hadna explained ... that's one thing she never did - explain sex or the facts o' life or childbirth or what have y'. I hadn't a clue. I hadn't a clue. But she thought she'd plenty of time. Pauline was actually an eight month baby ... so anyway, I'd been up, as I say, f' six weeks thinkin', "This is it", y' know 'n' then all of a sudden on the 15th December at five o' clock in the morning when I still hadn't been t' bed the pains got worse 'n' worse --- 'n' things musta got really bad about six o' clock in the morning 'n' Stan jumped out o' bed, "Oh, what'll I do?! What'll I do?!" So I waited till he wakened Mr 'n' Mrs Renaldo who we lodged with. They got up. They didna have a family, they had an adopted daughter, so they didna know much about it all. Mr Renaldo kept giving me castor oil. So anyway, the nurse lived about three hundred yards from us so Stan's oot runnin' along the street f' her. She comes flying up 'n' sends Stan f' Dr Saunders. But before he arrived the nurse got the ambulance. There was no maternity hospital apart f' Dunfermline so I was booked int' the one just outside Dundee. So the ambulance came 'n' by this

time Stan 'n' Mrs Renaldo had got me dressed - m' long nightgown, this checked dress, m' huge leather boots 'n' a big coat t' go over the top! So the ambulance man comes flying up the stairs, looks at me, lifts me off the chair, runs down the stairs with me in his arms, gets t' the ambulance door, had another look at me 'n' did an about turn 'n' back up the stairs again 'n' said, "Oh for God's sake, somebody get a doctor". I wasna frightened t' be honest. I just couldna cared less about anything, I just wanted t' curl up some place 'n' stop the pains 'n' go t' sleep --- This ambulance man ... it tickled me ... it really amused me. I just saw the funny side o' things. The boots, m' frock, m' best frock over m' nightie 'n' big leather boots along wi' it! That really amused me. So anyway, Dr Saunders arrived 'n' I never forgave him. He put chloroform on this pad 'n' he didna have time t' use it so he put it on top o' my chest o' drawers that I kept highly polished, y' coulda seen y' face in it, 'n' he lifted all the varnish off! I had this big stain 'n' I never ever forgave Dr Saunders f' that.

Apart from the rather farcical surroundings the birth of Lucy's first child went O.K., as did the birth of her second child, also a daughter, Carol, two years later. However, she was not so lucky with the birth of her third child and first son, Arthur, born in 1956. Both Lucy and the baby were very ill and Arthur in particular was not expected to pull through. Lucy took thrombosis in her leg and Arthur was a rhesus baby owing to the fact that, although Pauline and Carol had been all right, it was discovered that Lucy had rhesus negative blood while Stan had rhesus positive. Lucy and Arthur were both in hospital for a considerable time during which her mum and one of her sisters had the girls, and her neighbour Madge did the washing and ironing. Similar problems ensued with Lucy's last child, Joanne, born in 1958 for she too had to have her blood changed at birth.



Before moving on to look at the next generation in line of descent I will take a brief glimpse into the later married lives of Cissie, Janie, Kate and Lucy.

### Bella Bolton

Unfortunately, Bella Bolton never talked about her more recent past or her children growing up, apart from stressing to me several times during the course of our chat that she had been married forty-three years and two weeks.

### Cissie Bell

Sadly, as we know, Cissie Bell's husband had died prematurely and this had been one of the biggest blows of her life. Almost twenty years later she still missed him terribly.

He was awful good t' me ... I still miss him .. he never argued wi' me ... he never put a hand on me ... He used t' give me the money from the fruit business, he used t' give me the bag. We shared everything 'n' every Monday he'd say "I'll watch the shop, you go t' Glasgow". I'm awf' glad I got that man, though. He worked hard. See he worked f' his mother ... see long ago y' were hardly at the school, in olden times ... well, he used t' go wi' his mother t' the fruit market in Glasgow.

Both Cissie and Hamish worked from very early morning till late at night in the fruit shop, an enterprise only possible because Cissie's eldest daughter took complete charge of the running of the household.

Cissie was the boss o' them all. She kept them in their place. Cissie done all the housework. She was the boss. M' man used t' go t' the fruit market 'n' she got a row cos she hadna the hoose sorted f' him coming in 'n' that. 'N' she looked after them all when they were all babies. See I used t' goo oot wi' m' man f' the fruit. 'N' we worked in the shop 'n' we got the wee girl t' look after them all.

Despite Cissie's comment about Hamish in this quote he also used to help in the house to a considerable extent and eased the burden<sup>of his</sup> wife and especially his eldest daughter in this respect. he helped in the kitchen and with the children, "he bathed them 'n' everything".

The most significant event in Cissie's life, apart from the death of Hamish, had been the death of her youngest daughter, Catherine, from a brain haemorrhage. She had died in her mid-twenties, two years before my interview took place. Cissie and most of her family were still shattered by the death. Since the tragedy Cissie had spent most of her time living at Catherine's council house with another son, who was in jail when I visited, his common-law wife and their baby. They had turned the entire living room into a huge shrine to Catherine. It contained a large photograph of her, flowers, candles and poems written by the son that was in jail. When Catherine died she left a son and a daughter whom Cissie looked after initially. She still looked after her grand-daughter, "she'll no leave me", but her grandson had gone to live with his father who had remarried by this time.

## Janie Black

Janie Black's life had also been dogged by illness and premature death. Since her marriage she was never a well woman herself and had spent a great deal of time in and out of hospital with serious illnesses. For much of her married life it had been her husband who had had to take control of the house and the children. In the late fifties Janie had been into the Infirmary for a hysterectomy, 'the big operation', and in 1963 she'd had to go in to have a mastectomy when it was discovered she had cancer. Apart from the trials of her own illnesses which weakened her for the rest of her life it seems, she had to contend with the death of one of her granddaughters, Angela, who died from appendicitis aged sixteen, and the pain of having to watch her own daughter, Margaret, recover as well as she could from a very serious road accident in 1966.

The family's early life had been difficult because of the physical environment they were in. Janie had lived for thirty-one years in a room and kitchen which didn't have water or even a sink. The water had to be fetched from a well with a pail and there were different pails for different things. Dishes, for instance, were washed in a basin on the table, the basin was then emptied into a slop pail which in turn had to be taken outside and emptied down the washhouse drains. Like women of the previous generation Janie had to do her washing in a washhouse comprising the old tub, boiler and washboard but Janie was well

organised and said that she "thought nothing of it". In all she believed she enjoyed her time in the room and kitchen in King Street, mainly because of her neighbours.

In King Street everybody were really neighbours. People danced outside at night to the accordion 'n' fiddle 'n' sometimes the pipes - everybody from the two miner's rows. 'N' y' could walk int' anybody's house. We were all the same then, we all wore the same kind o' clothes 'n' had the same houses. I don't think people are s' friendly now. They all think theirsels, "I'm it!" now. That's the style. A woman going int' a pub was terrible in my younger days. Morals have changed f' the worse. 'N' there wasn't s' much vandalism ... long ago y' got the birch or the belt ... or all this divorce 'n' drinking 'n' living up together. It's the modern age now right enough.

#### Kate Brodie

Similarly Kate Brodie hadn't been well in recent years and when I spoke to her she was suffering from hypertension, high blood pressure, a hiatus hernia and a bad heel which had been operated on incorrectly. A lot of her trouble stemmed from worrying about her husband's ill health, her son-in-law's premature death and her daughter's welfare. Up until she was fifty-four Kate had worked in the Windsor Hospital as a ward's maid, a job she absolutely loved despite having to work shifts. She started at the hospital when she was thirty-nine once her children had grown-up. Before that she claimed she "never worked" but it transpired that she had in fact gone cleaning houses for two or three hours in the mornings. It was through hypertension that Kate had to give up her job in the hospital.



After being perfectly healthy up until then she took ill more or less overnight and had never been right since. It was around this time that her daughter's husband, Mark, was killed by a lorry he was working on running over him. Mark and Kate had been married twelve years and they had two children, Stan ten and Kate eight.

Oh, it was a terrible time! We went 'n' stayed with Kate for more than a year. Wilf and I went and stayed with her more than a year.

Kate Jnr. did get over Mark's death in time, after a lot of help from Kate and Wilf, and eventually started seeing another man, Len, whom all the family liked very much. They decided not to get married until Mark and Kate left home so it was five years before they tied the knot in 1977. Nine months later dropped Len dead on the golf course from a massive heart attack.

So that was another terrible thing. The last time I was at the doctor's he said t' me, "Course y' know where half your trouble is - 20 Botany Avenue (her daughter's house)". Y' just wonder what it's all for.

Kate and Wilf were themselves still very close. Wilf was still working, as a security guard in a factory, although he had suffered a heart attack a couple of years previously.

F' I was young it's always been m' man 'n' m' family. I never made another woman friend or anything. I know plenty folk. I like m' hoose. I like m' ane bed 'n' m' ane hoose. I never go on

holiday. But I don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing when y' get older, y' know, just stickin' t' y' man 'n' y' family ... I've a good husband. I think more of him now than the day I married him. I always hope that I'll go first ... As I say, when y're young 'n' y' whole life in front o' y' y'll always meet somebody else but no when y're my age. I could never see anyone else in his place. Since his heart attack I keep checking in the night t' make sure he's still breathing. Kate always says, "Y're killin' m' dad wi' kindness. He's no invalid, leave him". He thinks I'm daft. He just takes life as it comes. He's easy come, easy go, lives one day t' another. There's only one thing he worries about 'n' that's his daughter --- Kate 'n' her dad there's nothing like it. Oh, God! Her first husband, even her second husband, used t' say, "Ay, it's a pity y' couldna marry y' dad" --- She can't do any wrong as far as he's concerned. Y' know, they've a great carry on. But, I mean, he's been a good husband and a good father.

### Lucy Bremner

It can't be said that Lucy had a good husband or her children a good father in the shape of Stan. After their marriage Lucy discovered that he was a compulsive gambler. Her life was hell.

I didna have a very good married life t' begin with. It was really hard. Stan was a compulsive gambler. I found that out later on. And he would gamble his whole week's wages which wasn't a lot but I mean that was all I had t' rear the two bairns on ... I was a baker. I used t' bake, 'n' I could eke out because of m' mum's training. I'd no bread, I'd no money t' buy bread so I had flour in the house 'n' I made scones. I just had t' make do. It was the only thing I could do. 'N' I used t' do all their knitting. I did wee twin sets 'n' skirts 'n' dresses 'n' embroidery on them. 'N' I used t' dress them the same 'n' everybody used t' admire all m' handiwork. But if they'd only known. It was the only way I could dress them. I don't know how I got through it ... At that time I

actually went back t' m' mother's with the children 'n' then I thought, 'Well, it's just not fair. She's reared me all these years. Why should I come back 'n' burden her with more children?' I don't know what I'd have done without her. She used t' come through with groceries, food f' the bairns ... I still went home with the two girls every weekend 'n' stay overnight. Every time I got t' Kincardine Bridge my heart would sink, "Oh, gosh. I'm going back there". And yet the people were so nice. I made so many friends there but I used t' think I was so far away from my own family it was unbelievable.

At this time Lucy, Stan, Pauline and Carol were living in a prefab in Crosshill and they were still there in 1956 when Arthur was born. They were also still in financial difficulties because Stan's gambling continued unabated. Once Lucy was over the worst of Arthur's birth she went to work in a fish and chip shop for three nights a week. It wasn't good money but as she rightly said, "it was money helping me t' rear the family". At several points Lucy did think of leaving Stan but her prevailing attitude tended to be,

I've made my bed I've got to lie on it 'n' why should I shoulder somebody else with my responsibilities?

After Lucy's last child was born the family moved to Ballingry as Stan had been forced to change jobs when the pit he worked at closed and he went to work at the cementation plant. It was when they moved here that Lucy started a new job as a part-time insurance agent for Scottish Legal, for which she was paid commission not wages. Her three eldest children were at school by this time and the neighbours looked after Joanne. Lucy

made sure that she fitted her hours around school hours and that she was always home for meal-times. It sounded a difficult and complicated life but Lucy was adamant it wasn't.

I was used t' hard work, y' know. Y' just took it in y' stride.

Typical of Lucy's work record it wasn't too long before she'd landed herself a much better job, in the sense of being paid a wage and commission, at Household Supplies. One of their representatives in the area had approached her and asked her if she'd take the job on. The job this time was full-time but the bulk of the work was concentrated at the end of the week, Fridays and Saturdays, after people had received their wages. "So I organised the house 'n' took a full-time job". In this position Lucy's wage was practically as much as Stan's so she couldn't really refuse and anyway she liked the work. It was while she was on this job that her father died at the age of seventy. Apart from the usual upset of such a bereavement Lucy never forgave herself for being the only one that wasn't at home on the night he died. The reason for this was that it took quite a while for the family to get news through to Lucy since she lived a considerable distance away. It was this incident that persuaded her once and for all that the only thing to do was to move back to Falkirk, to be near the rest of her family, particularly her mother. She told Stan straight about her plans saying,



We can get a house. I've worked all these years, I've been saving, I've been putting away every penny I could.

Stan said that he'd agree to the arrangement on the condition that Lucy agreed to give up her job. She agreed, Stan sold his car to get them a deposit for a house, they moved to Falkirk and bought a flat on George Street. As chance would have it the flat was straight across the road from the Falkirk Household Supplies office who lost no time in asking Lucy to re-join their staff. Despite Stan's severe opposition she agreed, having worked out that it would enable her to double her mortgage payments so that the flat would be her's in nine months rather than two and half years. In that time they'd be able to do it up sufficiently to sell at a handsome profit which is eventually what they did. Of course, the office Lucy went to work in was the one she'd been in all those years before. It was still run by the Fisher family and she knew most of the customers on her books having been born and bred in Falkirk. She loved the job, was in her element but in time the management of the organisation changed hands when the family business was bought out by a big concern. Lucy didn't like the style and had to leave through nerves after a second-time round of seventeen and a half years.

I can't say I missed the job because as I say y' lived on y' nerves, y' worked on y' nerves. It was y' nerves that kept y' going but I miss m' people because y' made awfully good friends, y' really did. Y' became a marriage guide, advice giver, you name it you were it, or even budgeting f' them. Y've no idea the rents that I paid int' the Town Offices - people that had got int' trouble with

their rents. Y' paid their rents f' them, their electricity bills, y' advised them. This boy's wife went away 'n' left him, y' were helping him with his washing 'n' doing such 'n' such, y' know,. Y' made a lot o' nice friends.

In later years Lucy's life with Stan settled down somewhat but Lucy was kept busy by her involvement in community affairs, by her elderly mother's increasing senility and by her daughters and their children who all lived very close at hand. At the time of my interview Lucy was the only one of the women discussed in the thesis that lived in her own property. She lived in a large bungalow which she had been able to buy after all her efforts through all the years. She had achieved much the same as her Grandpa Duffield who she'd admired so much as a child for being able to work his way up to buying a house on Alma Street. He had been a fine example to at least one of his grandchildren.

1939 OUTBREAK OF SECOND WORLD WAR ...  
1939 10% UNEMPLOYED ABSORBED BY WAR EFFORT ...  
1939 I.D. CARDS INTRODUCED ...  
1940 FOOD RATIONING STARTS ...  
1941 WOMEN CONSCRIPTED ...  
1941 WOMEN IN MEN'S JOBS AND IN FORCES ...  
1945 WAR ENDS, LEAVING 265,000 BRITISH DEAD ...

1942 BEVERIDGE REPORT ...  
1945 MUMS GET FAMILY ALLOWANCES ...  
1945 'WELFARE STATE' USHERS IN NEW SENSE OF SECURITY ...  
1952 ELIZABETH II'S CORONATION WATCHED BY MILLIONS ON T.V. ...  
1952 CONTRACEPTIVE PILL MANUFACTURED ...  
1954 FOOD RATIONING ENDS ...  
1955 DEATHS FROM TB FALLEN BY 64% IN 6 YEARS ...

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DAUGHTERS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

#### Introductions

Three daughters of the previous generation have been chosen together with Joan Christie to speak for this, the third generation of my study. They are Liz Chalmers, daughter of Janie Black; Cissie Campbell, daughter of Cissie Bell; and Kate Cowan, daughter of Kate Brodie. All were born just prior to the Second World War. Joan Christie is the oldest in this group - she was born in Standon in 1934, making her forty-six when I spoke to her. Liz Chalmers and Kate Cowan were both born in 1935, Liz in Lauriston and Kate in Stirling, making them forty-five while Cissie Campbell was born three years later, in 1938, in Falkirk making her forty-two.

#### Joan Christie

On her birth Joan became her parents fourth child and second daughter. Two more children followed her.

Colin was born first, then there was Jim, then there was Agnes, then there was me, Carrie 'n' Joe.



Now Carrie's a year and a half younger than me, I was two 'n' a half when Carrie was one 'n' a half. No, I was two 'n' a half, Carrie wasna quite a year, a week off a year, when Joe was born 'n' then m' sister just above me ... there was fourteen months just between me 'n' her. M' mother had four in three year 'n' seven months, 'n' it was a case o' just one after the other.

Joan was five when the Second World War broke out and her earliest memories were to do with the War or with illnesses, the two things in this case being connected. The main things that Joan remembered from these early days was illness and disease. At the time the family had just moved from Standon to Maddiston which although near Falkirk was more or less a village in the country. They'd only been there for three weeks when the place was flooded with refugees from Clydebank. Her mother didn't have room to take any in since she had six children of her own but Joan remembered the refugees well mainly because of the diseases she claimed they brought with them, in the form of whooping cough and measles. She was herself a sickly child and when she was five she contracted both whooping cough and measles which left her blind for two years during which time she routinely visited Falkirk Infirmary until her condition worsened and she was sent to Edinburgh Royal where she was kept in for two months. As a result of the treatment here she did regain her sight but her right eyelid was left with a permanent droop and she had to attend the hospital for regular check-ups until she was eleven.

I was always wee 'n' thin, the rest were bigger built than me; I was always thin --- 'N' in the morning, before y' went oot t' school, y' were all

in a line like that, f' top t' bottom, 'n' it was "A spoon of cod liver oil f' you, f' you, cod liver oil f' you 'n' two f' you!" I got double doses o' everything cos I was wee 'n' thin. I got double doses o' malt 'n' everything. I hated that cod liver oil 'n' I'd get the teaspoonful 'n' I'd have the one in m' mouth 'n' they'd say, "Open again! Get that swallowed!"

Cheerful as ever, even in these very young days, Joan could see the positive side of being "wee 'n' thin". This stature had a certain advantage in the sense that she was too small to accept hand-me-down clothes from her sister, she always had to get new ones. This, together with the fact that because she'd such small feet she had to wear girl's shoes for school rather than the more normal boy's dress shoes which girls wore for school, meant she was looked upon as being some kind of favourite in the family since she received this seemingly preferential treatment.

Only folk that had maybe two or three in the family got girl's shoes. Well, I had t' get girls shoes. I had long feet that were very, very thin.

Joan described the time of her childhood as a "pretty placid sort o' life despite the War 'n' things like that". Joan said that they were a close family and put this down to the fact that her mother never went out to work, "except when necessary", but since "when necessary" turned out to be most of the time the reasons for the family being happy turned out to be imaginary rather than real. Joan's family of origin was large and objectively quite poor but she said,

There were a lot poorer people than us. They used t' have the same income coming in but they didna have the same mother 'n' father t' work it out. M' mother could make a meal out o' anything. 'N' during the War 'n' that y' just didna get Christmasses. Things like Christmas, only the rich could get it through the black market 'n' things like that. Y' had t' have plenty money t' get toys. But wi' m' dad he could make things. He made blackboards, he made doll's furniture - I remember he made a dining-room suite for Kathy, a wee sideboard wi' a wee mirror, the wee drawers 'n' everything, a pull-out table, four chairs. He made doll's cots ... we werena actually deprived o' toys, we were lucky in that way. He was very handy, he used t' make jumping jacks ... auch, he could just make anything.

Joe, Joan's father, had been "a sorta reservist" so when the the Second World War broke out he had to go into the army immediately. However, he was only in a short time before being invalided out when the army discovered he had a heart condition. He was quite ill at the time and placed a further burden on Joan's mother, Lizzie, who already had six young children to contend with as well as working on munitions making bullets in one of the foundry's. For part of the time that Lizzie was in the foundry and Joe was in the Infirmary an aunt stayed with the family but despite her own illnesses it was Joan who was a tower of strength to her mother and the rest of her family.

M' mother had m' dad t' look after 'n' it was a big family 'n' I did all the groceries. M' mother couldn't have told y' one coupon from another in the ration books 'n' I was only ... at this time ... I'd only be about eight. I don't think they'd be able t' cope with anything like that now.

Joan and her brothers and sisters helped their mother and



father keep the house and the chores in order.

We just had jobs. The boys did the splitting o' the sticks, of course it was coal fires. The girls - one washed, one dried, one put away the dishes. Everything was in order 'n' when I look at this house 'n' think of what m' mother's was like. Everything was a routine, y' had t' have a routine 'n' I canna really remember m' mother's house being untidy when we were kids --- 'N' y' coal was under the bed 'n' every week before the coalman came ... this is a fact ... every week before the coalman came well, we used t' get the coal brought from the pit 'n' before that coal came, if there was coal under the bed ... of course, it was the big bits of coal it wasna the dross ... that was sold as dross 'n' they kept it outside; the coal sold now was rubbish then ... 'n', anyway, these big pieces o' coal were stacked under the bed cos the beds were high 'n' they were wooden 'n' it was wooden slats 'n' everything on it 'n' ... erm ... the bed, y' would take the mattress 'n' everything off 'n' that was scrubbed till it was white 'n' then the coal was put back in again.

This must have been quite a feat with six children and two adults living in a room and kitchen.

Of course, it was rooms 'n' kitchens. It was set-in beds, y' know, beds were sorta set int' y' rooms 'n' y' kitchens. We were lucky we had a room 'n' kitchen, a lot o' them were just single ends where it was just ... everything was just in the one end, just in one room. Granted they were big rooms 'n' the beds must o' been giant-size now I come t' think o' it because we had ... erm ... m' mum 'n' dad stayed in that room 'n' there was always a cot 'n' pram ... well, maybe the one up t' three would sleep in the cot while the baby up t' maybe a year 'n' a half would sleep in the pram. 'N' then the other four would be in the bed. Two at the top 'n' two at the bottom, that's how it was. 'N' it was white linen covers. I used t' call it 'the tulip cover' cos it was sort o' embossed wi' these tulips.

Before they got underneath the 'tulip cover' the children



were bathed, every night, for not only were the room and kitchen kept clean and orderly so were the occupants.

We were bathed every night, the lot. See now, looking at it, if it was me I think I would just say, "I'll top 'n' tail y', wash y' face 'n' y' hands 'n' that" but no that tub came out every night 'n' it started wi' the wee yun, the baby was bathed, 'n' see mother did that one. The next one ... as she was gettin' the wee one sorted ... the next one would be in. M' dad would wash 'n' dry that one. Well, they were fed, then the water would be maybe changed 'n' then the next one would go in. M' mother would wash it, they'd step out, m' dad would dry us 'n' comb wor hair, the next one would step in 'n' that's how it went until the six o' us were bathed; every night.

Joan's father not only helped with this mammoth task but came, through circumstances of illness, to undergo a complete role reversal with his wife. It was discovered that besides his heart condition Joe also had sugar diabetes and high blood pressure. He didn't stop working when he was dismissed from the army although he'd been told by the doctor to rest. He went on to become a warden at a borstal until they found out about his health and from there to be a crane driver in the docks at Grangemouth until they too finally discovered the truth about him. He never worked after 1943 when Joan was eleven.

When he came out the army he was told t' have five years rest which was impossible with six o' a family. But if he'd done it then he might still be alive today. Of course as soon as he could get a job, well, he never said anything about his health. He never worked after he was forty-seven but it wasna f' the want o' tryin'.

Even then because he was such a proud man he signed on at the Labour Exchange instead of going to the Assistance Board where he'd have been able to claim extra money for his family. He only received three pounds a week unemployment benefit. It was at this point that Joan's mother started going out to work and Joe started taking care of the house.

M' mother worked in the Infirmary, in the stores, 'n' m' dad looked after the house. 'N' he could do anything. He was really marvellous. The only thing he couldna do was knit ... but he could crochet 'n' he could darn 'n' y' wouldna even see it. He was a better darner than m' mother 'n', I mean, m' mother's a good darner. 'N' I mean then y' bought wool stockings 'n' y' couldna discard them ... y'd t' darn them 'n' y' could hardly see that darn when m' dad'd done it. 'N' t' this day m' mother's got what y' call his 'housewife'. It's just like a wee lap bag, it folds up. He got it in the army. There's still his army brushes in it that he used f' polishing shoes. 'N' he was the type o' person, if he saw y' polishing y' shoes wi' the laces in y' were checked right away. Of course, y' see, y' get this in the army. 'N' he held the ... it was a silver-mounted stick that the best soldier got every year 'n' held it f' a year 'n' he held it all the years he was in the army. That was f' cleanliness --- He could bake, he was a beautiful baker. He used t' make shortbread 'n' cake 'n' things 'n' steak pie. Cos with m' mother working m' dad used t' take her place. She never had t' do a thing in the house when she came in. He did it all --- because he was such a proud man m' mother would never o' been allowed t' go out t' work. He'd o' gone out 'n' he'd o' killed himself working but he couldna get work because by this time his medical history was known. They knew his medical history with the result that he'd be sent away f' a medical t' Glasgow 'n' the result'd come back 'n' no way could they give him a job. Eventually m' sister was working 'n' I started working but the rest were at school or in the house 'n' it was just a case o' he wouldna o' had m' mother out working but it was always earning that came in.

Joe did get his wife to give up her job when she reached 'the change of life' by which time Jim, Joe, Carrie and Joan were working.

We didna have a lot o' money but we'd enough t' get by 'n' the house was nicely furnished 'n' family allowances had started so that was a big help.

### Liz Chalmers

Liz Chalmers' family of origin was quite poor too, as has already been indicated by her mother, Janie Black. Liz said, several times over, "M' mother never knew what good pay was". Liz was born in the single end in Lauriston, which Janie has already told us about, but moved to the room and kitchen in Shieldhill when her father, Joe, left the pit to work in the brickworks. As we know, Liz's mother, Janie, was ill quite a lot which meant that Liz, being the eldest in the family and being a girl, had a great deal to do in the house as a child.

I had t' wash all the nappies in a tub, with a board and a boiler, outside in the washhouse. But I never thought nothing about it, going in the washhouse t' wash. I helped m' granny a lot too. I liked blackleading best but I always seemed t' end up in the washhouse.

The only other thing that stood out in Liz's memory from her childhood was once again connected with illness. One of her brothers 'took' St. Vitus dance and her mother, who wasn't well herself, nursed him constantly for eight or nine weeks while Liz

got on with the rest of the family and household.

### Kate Cowan

Kate, as a child of four, and her younger brother, Andrew, were taken from Falkirk, their birthplace, to Stirling, their mother's birthplace. Kate 1 has told us how she and the children went back to her mother's for the duration of the war. Since Kate 1 was working full-time in the fish shop Kate and Andrew were more or less brought up by their gran. What wasn't clear from Kate 1's testimony but which is quite interesting was how full her mother's house was at the time. All Kate's aunts and uncles were still living at home at the time. And talking of the period when she stayed on at her granny's while her mother, father and brother went back to Falkirk, Kate said,

They were very hard they times with m' granny. She had twelve o' a family but three had died and so there were eight in the house 'n' me. Y' didn't get things easy then. Kids now don't realise they're born. M' grandfather was still alive, he died just before I was married. And m' granny had twins at forty-four 'n' there was only three years difference between me 'n' them. I was like their sister.

Once again this last comment shows a mixing of the generations that was likely to occur. Kate enjoyed having one of the twins as



a 'sister'. She remembered her mother working in the fish shop and that her father had been a prisoner of war but apart from that she said that she couldn't remember much about the war except for ration books, queues, clothing coupons and the street parties on the men's return. She said that she certainly hadn't been aware at the time where her father was or what he'd gone through and it was only looking back, after the death of her own husband, that she realised what her mother must have gone through. The most memorable event that Kate could recall from her childhood years was being rushed to hospital.

I'll always remember, I was at the tuppenny rush at the pictures and I got a pain in m' side and I was awf' sick. M' gran sent for the doctor 'n' he said I'd be alright. Then on the Sunday - m' gran had a bed recess 'n' I was in it 'n' something in m' stomach erupted 'n' I was violently sick. My appendix had burst 'n' I had peritonitis 'n' nearly died. I can remember that vividly 'n' I was only six. I was rushed int' hospital 'n' I had blood going in one arm 'n' glucose in the other. I've got a big scar. They had sent f' the priest, I was a Catholic at the time, 'n' he said I wasn't going t' die. Peritonitis was really serious in they days; that's going back thrity-nine year. I remember the girl in the next bed t' me dying. It was all a doctor's error. He should have realised on the Saturday what I had.

It wasn't until her early teens that Kate left her gran's to go back to live with her own family.

M' father was a prisoner of war for six years so we stayed in Stirling. They came back to Falkirk and I stayed with m' gran f' a while.

She said that she wasn't sure what made her move back to live with her mother and father but seemed to believe it was

because her brother was very lonely. On her father's return from the war Kate was asked whether she wanted to live with her granny or her parents and she could never decide so she remained at her granny's but always went back to Falkirk at the weekends and in the school holidays. She said that she never regretted her eventual permanent return to Falkirk because besides being back with her family she liked the place very much.

### Cissie Campbell

Cissie Campbell, daughter of Cissie Bell, had a great deal to say about her childhood and its significance for her later life. She was born in 1938 and was quite sure about that, which is interesting because her mother had claimed to have had Cissie at the age of twenty-seven but by her daughter's reckoning she actually had her when she was twenty-four. She was the eldest child of a family of ten, four sisters and five brothers followed her. Not only was Cissie the oldest child she was also female and this was still significant in some families in the forties and fifties. At the beginning of her story she retorted,

It was no pleasure being the oldest of a big family. No way. It was murder. I felt sorry f' m' mother cos she'd been orphaned when she was eight but I never wish anybody t' be the eldest of a big family. The pressure!

This set the tone for the whole of her attitude towards her childhood which couldn't be described as a happy time. Her

mother did indicate that Cissie had been relied upon but had not indicated quite how much. It is clear from Cissie's case that although it was common practice for children, and particularly girls, to help their parents in a crucial way from a very early age that is not the same as saying that the children always did their 'duty' ungrudgingly.

I was even brought up in a basket under the counter in the shop. M' mum worked in the shop 'n' on the lorry wi' m' dad --- We werena pushed out or anything but I was left 'n' I resented that. Even yet I'm a spiteful woman. No s' much now but in m' early marriage ... I think it was the way I was brought up. Looking back the things I missed. I didna get oot like other kids. If somebody came t' the door f' y', y' couldna get oot t' play or that. We had t' help --- the boys were no bad cos they could do a bit o' something if they had to but they werena pressed on t' do it. I was pressed on, more so even than m' other sisters. They could goo oot 'n' play but I was depended on. I had t' be there --- t' be honest I daren't o' said "No" t' m' mother. I knew I couldn't say "No", whether I wanted t' do a thing or not. Y' had t' do it, y' didn't have t' say a thing. Y' just knew it.

Because her mother and father had to work so hard in the shop and round the markets to make any kind of living for their very large family Cissie knew that her work in the house and with the children, even at times in the shop, had to come before play and indeed before school.

Whenever m' mum had a baby I had t' stay off school f' a month. I lost a lot o' education. I had t' stay off f' a month at a time t' help with what was going on in the house ... I did the cooking, washing, scrubbing. There was no Hoover. It was a table in the middle o' the floor, y' had lino, 'n' m' mother always liked furniture pulled out. Y' had t' pull the furniture out or that wasn't



scrubbed, it wasn't clean --- I did that f' I was about eight years old. In fact, I've helped since I was younger cos people have said I used t' stand on a chair in the shop 'n' open the door for people.

Although she doesn't recall being there very much Cissie liked school and managed quite ingeniously at times to organise her life and responsibilities there with her life and responsibilities at home.

I loved school for which part I was at it. I loved domestic. That was another thing that happened. I was quite friendly wi' two or three o' the housewifery. Y' maybe had cookery f' two periods 'n' the next two'd be housework 'n' they'd say, "Bring in a jumper f' washing", y' know. Well, the day it was t' be something f' washing I'd say, "Mum, we've t' take something f' washing" 'n' I'd fill a bag. Mind you, there were quite a few things in it. 'N' I used t' skip int' the classroom, put the things in the sink so she wouldna see how many articles I had with me. But having s' many brothers 'n' sisters I said t' m'sel' that well I'd have still have had t' help at night t' do the washing but when I went t' school I got them in the sink. The teacher got fly t' me, she never let on but she would let me go in 'n' she'd say, "If anybody needs anything washing today just go up 'n' Cissie'll give you it". 'N' y'd get them all washed 'n' then y'd have them all on the pulley 'n' that's when y' knew how much y' had. So at night after y'd gone t' y' other classes I'd go in 'n' collect the washing. Y' know, the great feeling it was! I mean really when I think back I used t' get a lot o' pleasure out o' that. I mean I was at school supposed t' be learning this, that 'n' the other - here was me gettin' this bundle o' washing t' take back home 'n' they were all clean. There was a lot o' satisfaction in that.

There wasn't much sense of satisfaction in Cissie's younger life. Her time at home strikingly displayed the disadvantages of being from a large family at a time when large families were no



longer the norm. She summed up her childhood in the following paragraph, the sentiments of which are reminiscent of what Maisie Agnew, in the first generation, said about being part of a big family.

I was awf' self-conscious at everything all the time. Being in a big family y' come up against a lot o' things. There's a lot o' criticisms from outside. Some people just get y' f' what y' are 'n' the way y're brought up 'n' y' want t' be somebody but there's so many of y', y're in a rut. Y' want t' do something f' y'sel'. I'm still self-conscious. As m' man says, I'm too serious, that's what it is. I was hurt s' much long ago, I think I take things t' me too much.

It is worth noting, before moving on in the life stories, to note that like a good many of the women already mentioned Cissie distinctly remembered being very close to her father while a child. She said that all her family were close but that she was "closest of all" to her dad. He helped her with the housework, particularly in the evenings and he was an easy-going man who was easy to talk to.

I could sit 'n' blether t' m' dad but not t' m' mum. M' mother cared in her own way but she had s' much t' do 'n' she had kid after kid.

## Adolescence

### Joan Christie

Joan, like the girls we have come across in previous

generations, got an exemption from school at the end of her time there.

I was fair at school. I believe I was above average. The last six months o' m' school I had an exemption. They don't get that now, they get help in other ways but then y' helped y'sel', y' paid f' doctors 'n' everything.

On leaving school Joan went to work in a department store in the centre of Falkirk called Bishop's. The working week was six days long and the working day ran from approximately 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

I got the eight o' clock bus cos y' had t' be at y' counter f' eight-thirty. We finished at six but then y' had t' sweep up so I got the six-thirty bus home.

Joan liked Bishop's and was getting very well which was made evident when she got a counter of her own after only being there for two weeks, and by the management telling her that she was one of their best workers. The reason for this she reckoned was that she was so used to working in the house that whatever she was asked to do in the shop she just got on and did it without question and without moaning. She stressed that her behaviour was not the result of her being "a wee creep" but because it was "natural" to her, second nature. A nature like this in a young girl obviously went down well in outside employment but it didn't mean Joan got well paid for her trouble and compliancy. Her wages amounted to twenty-seven shillings but out of that she'd to

pay 2/4 for a stamp and buy a weekly bus ticket which cost a pound. The remainder she gave to her mother from whom she received a shilling pocket money.

--- the rest went int' help because there was a family behind us 'n' y' didn't expect any more.

Joan had a friend of the same age who was from a family of seven but who received 2/6 pocket money, the difference being that in her family her father was in work. This comparison prompted Joan to go to look for a better paying job on her afternoon off despite the fact that after eight months she still enjoyed Bishop's and was able to get her father cigarettes off ration.

I went 'n' got a job in a laundry where the wages were 12 10s as compared to the 27s in Bishop's. I had an independent nature and just made m' mind up t' go 'n' get this new job.

Joan was duly pleased with herself at such progress up the wage scale and promptly handed in her notice at Bishop's, not without a little regret. However, her pleasure didn't last long for when her father found out what was afoot he forbade her to go to the laundry, on the grounds that she was too "paley-waley", despite the fact that two of her sisters were there. She had to withdraw her notice. Three weeks later, though, it went in again for this time she got a job at the Co-op. She'd had her name down with the Co-operative since leaving school and was sent word that if she passed the required maths exam she'd get a job in one of

their stores. Maths being one of Joan's strong points, this requirement proved no problem. The wages at the Co-op were considerably better, £2 6s a week, and so were the perks since it was possible to buy sugar and butter off ration. Joan was just as conscientious at the Co-op as she had been at Bishop's and stayed behind every night, at the Polmont Station Co-op, to help the manager stack the shelves for the next day even though it wasn't part of her job. She was also sent on day-release where she took "sort of 'O' levels in English and maths". She did well in these subjects and was presented with certificates and a ballpoint pen at the staff dance, an achievement which shows it was a pity that she had to leave school early because she seemed to have a natural aptitude for figures. Besides helping the manager and studying Joan used to go messages for folk round about on her way in and out of work for which she was paid about 2/6 meaning that her pocket money was increased by a hundred percent to five shillings. Her actual job in the store was an assistant in the grocery division which was quite hard work in these days because all provisions arrived loose at the store so that everything from margarine to lentils had to be weighed and packed on the premises.

I was working on marble slabs 'n' with cold water  
all the time.

Joan began feeling quite ill but she tried to ignore the fact because the shop was very busy at the time as a result of prices constantly changing as more and more goods came off



ration, and she "wouldn't take a day off work for love n' money". Joan started to wear extra layers of clothing so that no-one would notice how thin and ill she was looking.

I'd wear two or three jumpers wi' the result that m' face was always thin but m' body didna look as thin as it actually was. I was fly enough t' do this cos I knew they'd make me go t' the doctor. 'N' I couldn't face tea, everything I ate I was sick but I was hiding it; I was hiding it from my folks. I'd that sense t' hide it 'n' I used t' wash m' own underwear ... I was gettin' up through the night t' wash m' underwear cos o' the sweat.

Whether Joan's action can be described as sensible or foolish she did manage to hide the extent of her illness from her parents and her workmates for a long time until she started falling asleep in the evenings as soon as she got in from work from sheer weakness. She took pneumonia and pleurisy and then after further examinations and tests TB was diagnosed. Even after going to a doctor it actually took some considerable effort on her parents part to get the GP to do more than continue sending Joan away with a bottle of tonic 'to build herself up'. No-one anticipated the seriousness of her condition.

The doctor'd said t' m' dad there was no hope, there was absolutely no hope. It'd went too far. M' right lung was completely away 'n' the top part o' m' left one.

She'd just turned eighteen when she was admitted to the Borough Hospital for Infectious Diseases where she was to remain for fifteen months, the first six flat out on her back. The main

treatment which Joan received was streptomycine injections but she believed it was through her tremendous willpower and spirit that she ultimately survived. On her release from hospital Joan was slightly disoriented because the other patients who were all long-stay had become like a family to her, besides which she had become totally accustomed to the very routinised life in an institution. Her lungs had to be x-rayed every three months for two years, then every six months, and eventually every ten years.

### **Liz Chalmers**

Like Joan, Liz Chalmers wasn't at school very much in her last year there because her mother was in hospital at the time and was "very ill". So Liz left school officially at fourteen and started work in Dunn and Wilson's Bookbinders. She was paid twenty-six shillings a week, "quite a good wage", which by the end of two years had gone up to five pounds. Whatever the wage it was handed over to her mother for the family. Liz enjoyed her job binding books very much.

### **Kate Cowan**

Kate left school at fifteen and went to work first of all in a bakery and then in the brickworks, making the bricks, but she didn't say much more than these barest details about this particular time of her life, probably because later events were to totally overshadow it.

## Cissie Campbell

When Cissie left school she was offered a job as a domestic at Callendar Park but it was a requirement of the job that she live in and since she wasn't keen to do this she turned the offer down. She quickly found another job in Barr's lemonade factory where she was responsible for making up the different flavours of syrup. She was only there a fortnight, however, before she found herself another job, this time at Sunnyside Foundry, making fires. Although the wages here were nothing to write home about and the work was hard, heavy and dirty, "y' were covered in oil 'n' grease", Cissie really liked the job mainly because "the gaffers didn't bother y' 'n' y' worked with all men". Cissie said that she generally found that she got on better with men, especially as workmates since they aren't prone to the same bitchiness as women, "y' can be freer wi' men". To carry out their job Cissie and her workmates had to wear coarse potato sacks so that the metal they were working with didn't cut their clothes. Cissie's specific occupation was a driller which meant she drilled holes in the fire surrounds ready for the screws going in, from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Y' had t' get y' knee under the fire 'n' drill it while it was resting on y' knee. Can y' imagine that?

Cissie expanded quite a bit on life outside work during this phase of her life to give us glimpse at what it meant to be a

teenager in this generation as compared with earlier or later generations. She said that when she was a teenager her mother used to, as she put it, chase her up and down the street.

Y' had t' be in at a certain time. Y' daren't be after half ten. M' mother was awf' suspicious. Y' were always up t' something if y' were after a certain time. Oh, m' mother was awf' suspicious! Y' clothes were examined, for instance. She was very strict.

As noted earlier in the remarks about childhood, Cissie didn't find it easy to talk to her mother about anything much let alone more sensitive matters.

I can remember the first time I came a woman. I was petrified 'n' I couldn' have said t' m' mother. She was awf' self-conscious. She made things sound bad to us, even later in life. So I've been different wi' m' own.

Cissie said that even by the time she was engaged she didn't know where children came from.

Never, ever, ever. I was supposed t' pass things ont' m' sister but I never could. The way m' mother was, if she knew y'd heard from somebody she went off her head --- There was something nice about finding out. In one way it was good, in another way it was wrong because an awful lot in fear, y' know. T' find out y'sel' is a funny thing.



## Marriage

### Joan Christie

Joan met the man she was to become engaged to, Mick, before she went into hospital with TB and when she went home at the age of nineteen they started seeing each other again. Joan said that she had no intentions of marrying Mick at the beginning of the resumption of their relationship especially because of the condition of her lungs. If her remaining one didn't continue working properly she would die and it was the knowledge of this possibility that made her unable to contemplate marrying anyone. However, after a couple of years courting and good health she decided, or they decided that it was worth thinking seriously about getting married.

The main problem now was that Mick was a staunch Catholic. He helped the priest and served at the Altar and had been going away to be a lay brother abroad at the time that he met Joan. His aunt, who had brought him up since he was orphaned at the age of nine, was the priest's housekeeper. Mick told Joan straight that if they were to be married or even engaged she would have to become a Catholic first. He didn't believe in mixed marriages and thought that if she said that she'd convert after their marriage she probably wouldn't bother when the time came, so it was beforehand or not at all. Joan was quite keen on the idea saying that she'd "always had a notion to be something" but it appears that Mick's family tried to put her off the idea or so she

heard from various neighbours. Mick and Joan ended up falling out for nine months over all the trouble that was caused but Joan's sister got them back together again by telling each one that the other one wanted to see them at the pictures. Joan took religious instruction at the Catholic Church and they were married when she was twenty-two and a half. Both are still practising and devout Catholics.

### **Liz Chalmers**

Liz Chalmers was married considerably younger than Joan, when she was seventeen.

M' mother was nineteen when she got married so she didn't mind me getting married young and anyway there wasn't much else t' do.

She had met Fred, her husband, at the dancing held at the September weekend which went on until four in the morning. Even so, Liz was quick to point out that she didn't get up to much because her father had sent her cousin, who was "harmless but old-fashioned", with her as a chaperone. This was in 1952 and they were married a year later in 1953 without an intervening engagement. Liz said that they couldn't afford to get engaged because Fred's wages were only twelve shillings a week at the time. Likewise, they couldn't afford a big wedding so they were married in the manse and then had a tea in the house.

## Kate Cowan

Kate started courting Mark, her first husband, when she was fifteen and a half but he had to do National Service when he was eighteen. It seems as though Kate and Mark wished to be married before he went away but Kate's mother suggested they get engaged beforehand but wait until he came back before getting married which is, in fact, the course they followed. They were married on Mark's return in 1956 by which time they were both twenty-one. Their wedding was held in the Church of Scotland although up until this point Kate had been a Catholic, having followed the religion of the grandmother she had lived with.

## Cissie Campbell

Cissie Campbell met her husband-to-be in Sunnyside Foundry, where she worked and where he was a fitter, in 1954 when she was sixteen. They were engaged when she was seventeen and shortly afterwards he went to Singapore to do two years' National Service with the RAF. Rob asked Cissie to get engaged just before he went away, after they'd been seeing each other for about a year. Cissie accepted his proposal but was rather dubious all the same.

I'd got it int' m' head that m' parents wouldna let me get married cos they depended on me. I always felt they depended on me.

However, Cissie's parents raised no serious objections about her actual engagement but rather exerted control over her new status

while Rob was away.

While he was away I just kept doing things in the house because then y' parents would say that if y' were engaged t' one person y' couldna goo oot wi' another 'n' that's how we were brought up.

Cissie was married at the age of nineteen when Rob returned from Singapore.

### **Children and Married Life**

#### **Joan Christie**

Joan had five children - Michelle aged almost twenty-three, Glynis aged twenty-two, Bobby aged eighteen, Christina aged fourteen and Duncan aged twelve, meaning that her childbearing years had stretched from her early twenties to her mid-thirties.

The main events in Joan's life since her marriage seemed to have been the illness and death of her father. He was a diabetic for years but then had a stroke and had to have both his legs off as a result of gangrene. He was ill for five years and throughout this time Joan went up all day, every day, after leaving everything ready at home and doing her housework at night. She did all his washing and ironing, saying that it was a "privilege" to be able to help him in such a way. Immediately on hearing of her father's death Joan had gone hysterical although she couldn't remember what had happened and then two months later



she suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of delayed shock.

Joan had a shock of a different kind when she discovered that Michelle was pregnant but it all worked out O.K. in the end and she was proud of all her family. They were a talented bunch, Michelle was a singer and Glynis a Highland dancer while Duncan played the organ. Joan's own talents ranged from dressmaking to brick-making. She enjoyed life to the full.

### **Liz Chalmers**

Liz and Fred began their married life at Fred's mother's but in time they bought a room and kitchen for seventy pounds. It was unquestionably a place of their own but it had no electric light, only paraffin, and no water. Washing was still done outside in the washhouse in wash tubs. Liz already had one child when they moved to the room and kitchen and had another two

there before they moved again. At the beginning Liz's married life was very hard, it was an unrelenting struggle owing to the fact that Jim had a latent duodenal ulcer as a result of which he was unable to work for six years. Luckily, Fred was a successful poacher in his time and went out shooting and fishing for rabbits and salmon. Liz remembered making endless rabbit stews with the rabbit meat and then selling the skins of the animals.

I'd often have thirty or forty rabbits t' skin 'n'  
gut 'n' then I'd take these skins t' the shop t'

get money t' buy the kid's tea. Y' got 1/6 f' each fur so I'd come home with two or three pounds on Monday which'd last me till the buroo money arrived. I must have been desperate when I went with the rabbits. But then again when I think back t' when m' mum had us, she had a bigger struggle. She never knew what a big wage was.

Liz had five children while Fred was on the dole so his poaching wasn't enough to keep them going. Therefore, she worked in the tattie fields and went to the mill threshing for the extra they needed before eventually getting a full-time job in Stein's brickworks.

I couldn't have done it if Wendy hadn't given me a good help right enough. She did an awful lot for me. At the weekends we'd work together 'n' get the messages on Saturday and Sunday we'd wash 'n' iron all day when I was on back shift. Wendy never worked when she left school. She kept house while I worked. It was better that way because I was earning good money 'n' I was terrified that because she was always ill something would happen to her, like Angela.

She worked at the brickworks for eleven years, on day shifts from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and back shifts from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., until being made redundant the year before I met her. Liz had loved her job at Stein's, particularly for the good wages and the good company. However, her job was hard, heavy work. She had to lift the bricks off a machine after they'd been fired and they weighed up to 30lbs. As a result of such strenuous labour Liz was suffering from quite severe athritis in her neck. The worst thing about this as far as she was concerned was that the doctor had told her not to work again.

Of her children Liz said,

My big family just happened. I couldn't get the pill because of varicose veins in m' leg. So y' just had t' take a chance. That's when pills first came out 'n' our doctors didn't believe in them, especially if y' had varicose veins. I wondered what'd happen every time I had another one but I seemed t' bring another one up. Three years was the longest I had between children. But I had good patience and no bother.

Liz said that when she was about to give birth for the first time she was "terrified" and felt like running away.

I had terrible nerves wondering what they were gonna do. I didn't know what to expect. Y' never spoke about things like that. I knew something from the hospital but to make matters worse I was left on my own in the labour room in Stirling hospital while I was in labour and then I got all embarrassed about the stitches I had t' get. I needn't have worried.

Liz also had her next two children in hospital, having to have blood transfusions when she gave birth to her second child, Wendy. However, her final three confinements were at home.

It's a silly thing t' stay at home. I wouldn't advise it. I wanted t' stay at home f' the sake o' the rest o' the bairns, that's all. Robert and James were O.K. but after the last one. I should have been in hospital for the last one. It was just like a knife in the back and then everything stopped. I wasn't frightened but I knew something was different. It was a breach birth n' the baby was still born. It might have lived in hospital. For a week the midwife had been writing - 'foetal heart poorly', so really I should have been taken in. M' husband helped at this birth 'n' after he

saw what I went through he said there'd be no more. I was sterilised three years afterwards cos I had an infection in the womb 'n' it was advised. I'd had all the children I wanted.

Liz's married and family life had been shattered by the death of her eldest daughter, Angela, at the age of sixteen.

It was a big blow 'n' it had been such a simple thing - her appendix. She'd been in and out of hospital. Funny thing was Angela was always healthy. It was Wendy who had nervous asthma and everything. Angela would have been twenty-seven by now.

#### Kate Cowan

After Kate and Mark were married they lived with her mother for a year before buying a room and kitchen, where they stayed for another year until obtaining a council flat. Kate said that Mark was clever and had done well at school besides which he was an only child and his parents could probably have managed if he had wanted to continue his education. However, Mark wasn't interested and had started his working life as a painter and decorator. But while in the army he passed his driving test and decided to become a long distance lorry driver on his return to 'civvy' street. This was fine until he was married. He was away from home too much and decided it was no life for a married man. Eventually he was pleased at managing to get a job driving lorries locally. However, it was in this job that he was killed. A mate of his in another lorry ran over him never realising Mark was in the path of the vehicle.



It was a terrible thing. It's difficult bringing up two children at times. Very depressing at times. I went through a bad depression 'n' sometimes I thought was it worth carrying on. But y' remember the kids 'n' y' do. Maybe if it wasn't f' the kids I wouldna, I don't know.

Kate had both children in hospital, neither was an easy birth. Her first child, Mark was a forceps birth but although Kate had her second baby normally the second time was much worse and she decided after that experience not to have any more children. When Kate went in to the hospital to have Kate the sister said that she wasn't in labour and gave her an injection to knock her out for the night. However, Kate knew herself that she was ready to give birth and after another contraction the sister decided that perhaps the mother was right in this instance.

Then I got a row for pushing before I was in the labour room! She hit me across the jaw! But it was all her fault I should have been in the labour room a long time before. The baby was coming down so far and stopping so they decided to cut me. At one point the sister had her elbow and her knee in my stomach to stop Kate coming back up again. Y' do forget it. M' husband 'n' m' mother were going to report it but I told them not. The sister apologised. She said that we were both worked up. I definitely was not worked up.

Kate was very proud of her children. Both had done well in different ways. Mark had turned out to be very clever, he was a "studier" and was just about to graduate from Strathclyde University with a degree in civil engineering.

It runs in the family. M' mother was very clever. She won the bursary. She was right brainy but she had t' leave. The one thing she always wanted t' do was be a school teacher. Kate was the opposite t' Mark, she's like me. Kate had t' get married 'n' that was a bit of a blow but she's happy 'n' I've got a lovely granddaughter. She keeps the baby spotless. She's doing better than I thought.

When Kate found out her daughter was pregnant she said that she was shocked and hurt. She told Ian that he didn't have to marry her daughter because of what had happened but since they were due to be engaged Kate and Ian decided to be married. Ian's mother wanted them to have a quiet wedding but Kate, having calmed down, said that just because her daughter had made a mistake she was not going to condemn her for it.

My attitude was - there's thousands done it before and there's thousands'll do it after. She got married in champagne not white but I gave her the full treatment.

Kate was able to support Mark through his years at university when he lived at home and able to give Kate 'the full treatment' because she had worked full-time since Mark's died, as a driver on the school meals service. She had supported her children magnificently and was sad that they were at the stage were they were leaving home - "after Kate left I cried myself to sleep for about a month".

When her children left school Kate had remarried. She had

been seeing Len, who was to become her second husband for five yars but wanted to wait until the children finished their schooling before disrupting their lives.

At first I didn't think I'd get married again but m' mum 'n' dad started taking me out 'n' I met Len. I went with him for four years but we waited till the kids left school to get married. We were only married five months 'n' he died. He was away playing golf and took a heart attack. They reckon he was dead before he hit the ground. I thought, 'Oh no!'. I just couldna believe it. Both m' husbands were very good t' me 'n' the kids. Kate doted on Len cos she couldn't mind much of her dad. Sometimes I wonder what I've done to deserve everything I've gone through. If I could help somebody in my life I would, I wouldn't hinder them.

### Cissie Campbell

At the beginning of their married life Cissie and Rob lived with Cissie Snr. and Hamish which must have been some squeeze. Cissie described it thus,

We lived with m' mother f' a while. She had plenty beds. It was all beds. We paid f' our room 'n' bought stuff f' our meals and made our own.

But after a short time they were able to buy a small house in Larbert Station. It cost two hundred and fifty pounds and was eventually condemned.

I remember the first time we went t' the house we bought ourselves. Oh, I missed m' family terrible. I was crying all the time. It wasna like a marriage at first 'n' then y' just seemed t' work int' it.

When I spoke to her she stressed that they had been married twenty-two years although she never thought it would last that long. At the beginning of their marriage she said that her husband was definitely not sympathetic to the difficulties they were living through and "things were very hard". He didn't help at all with the children but was simply selfish. At the time when his family needed him he just couldn't have cared less, an attitude which came as quite a shock to Cissie after she had got used to her own father being quite helpful around the house and with the children despite his very hard job. Cissie had four children, the first three in the space of four years, her first one born when she was twenty-one. She implied that this was a deliberate policy, saying "we wanted them t' grow up with us".

I had them all one after the other, had them all quick ... that's how I wanted them.

When Cissie had her first child she had a pretty difficult time owing to a long labour but she wasn't worried or frightened because the health service by this time seemed to be providing a good and useful information service for expectant mums so that they were no longer as much in the dark as some women, including Cissie's own mother, had been before them.

Y' went t' places in the hospital t' find out about pregnancy 'n' everything. There were special classes. They made it easy f' y' by explaining everything.



Between her third and fourth child there was a large gap of five years but still Cissie had finished having children by the time she was thirty. This last child, Nigel, was born in the house whereas the others had been born in the hospital. Cissie said that she enjoyed the experience of a home confinement and also pointed out that her mother-in-law had been present at the time although Rob hadn't. Life for Cissie was getting slightly easier and less fraught by the time she had Nigel but it had been a struggle and the children and hard work showed, among other things, in her attitude towards the first the youngsters.

I was really very, very strict. I was really sore on them. I don't know if it was m' nerves. Actually, m' hair fell out wi' nerves. I got fed up looking after children. I never ever was out when they were wee. Everything centred round them 'n' we didn't have any money.

On top of everything else Cissie had suffered serious post-natal depression after the birth of her third child, Gordon, and it had only been the actions of her father which had prevented her from having a more serious nervous breakdown.

He was down every morning in the lorry. He always came down. If he hadna come I wouldna have come t' m'self. He was pushin' me.

At the time of the interview Cissie was looking after her daughter's child because her daughter, Anna, had given birth to an illegitimate child at the age of fifteen.

It was one o' these schoolgirl pregnancies ... it was an awf' shock. We didn't know till she was about six months she'd been scared t' tell us. I could have killed her. She had the baby a month after we found out. But there y' are, it's all worked out. She's married. She's no married the same chap right enough; they were too young, he was the same age as Mary. M' husband took it worse than I did. But that kind o' thing's what families are all about.

Although when talking about her own teenage years and the attitude of her mother towards sex and the facts of life, Cissie had said that she'd been "different" to her own, it transpired from what she had to say about Anna getting pregnant that she had been "different" after 'the event' when she'd literally been forced through circumstance into discussions regarding topics such as contraception. Until that point, from when admittedly she did become much more able to talk freely to both her daughters, the only thing she'd said to Cissie and Anna was, "Y' know right from wrong" - "that's all I ever said". She claimed that she had never heard of anyone getting pregnant before marriage when she was young although at another point in her story she went on to tell me how this very thing had happened to her own sister who ran away from home because of the embarrassment. Cissie said that after Mary had her baby she "put her on the pill" but said that she wouldn't have taken this course of action beforehand and if she had her time over again she still wouldn't.

'It' (sex before marriage) happens but I'm no for it. And yet the basis f' them gettin' married is probably different t' when I got married. I'm not saying temptation wasna there, it was there just the same. A strong-hearted mother, I think, was enough.

Aside from differences of opinion about sex and marriage Cissie and her daughters were very close. Anna still lived at her parents, together with her husband and son, and "Cissie's always round". Cissie could turn her hand to anything and while she couldn't help her daughters a great deal financially she helped them a lot in other ways. She had recently been to Cissie's house and knocked out all the kitchen cupboards for her and put in new units. She said that she got satisfaction out of doing things like this rather than simply helping with money. She also did her own, Cissie III's and her mother's gardens besides any painting and papering that needed doing. Of her relationship with her mother Cissie said much the same thing as Norah had said, in that they had got on much better later in life than they had at any other time, "we can have a blether now". However, Cissie had not seen much of her mother for a while because they'd had a difference of opinion.

This is the longest we've been away f' each other. She used t' have regular times f' coming down but she fits in too much wi' the families down where she lives.

It turned out that events surrounding the death of Cissie's sister, Catherine, had reverberated through the family causing

various ructions, particularly among the women. Having already met Cissie I I knew that she was living in Catherine's house, together with the common-law wife of her son who was in jail but Cissie II told me all about this again saying that perhaps the reason was,

She maybe feels a closeness there. There used to be a closeness there.

While Cissie II could, of course, appreciate her mother's feelings she didn't seem to understand the need for her to stay at Catherine's house all the time while leaving her own standing empty just up the hill. She implied that she didn't feel she could just pop in and out to see her mother while she was at Catherine's with her brother's common-law wife as she could and did when she was in her own house. She also implied that her brother and his 'wife' were perhaps taking advantage of her mother but she couldn't or wouldn't recognise the fact.

As if this wasn't complicated enough the real point of the whole business was yet to be revealed and this was that Catherine's husband had remarried, fair enough, but had married his niece, the daughter of Davina, who was the sister of both Catherine and Cissie II. While Cissie I continued to mix with all the parties involved - Davina and her daughter, etc. it looked as though she was condoning this marriage, something which Cissie said she thought she "could never accept".



We've always been awf' close but then our families are getting older. Y' keep your bit right 'n' that's it. I'm getting t' the stage that I'm not bothered how other people think.

1957 AFFLUENT SOCIETY BEGINS ...  
1961 YURI GARGARIN 1ST MAN IN SPACE ...  
1963 THE BEATLES ARE TOPS ...  
1964 MODS AND ROCKERS RIOT AT SEASIDE RESORTS ...  
1965 MINI-SKIRTS IN SWINGIN' LONDON ...  
1967 FIRST HEART TRANSPLANT ...  
1969 NEIL ARMSTRONG 1ST MAN ON MOON ...

## CHAPTER NINE

### DAUGHTERS OF THE SIXTIES

#### Introductions

I have chosen five of the people interviewed in this 'generation' to speak for it. Four were chosen because they are related to women whose stories we have already considered, and the fifth because her story of early married life had a slightly different but important twist to it which will become evident as we proceed.

#### Wendy Drake

At twenty-five, Wendy Drake was the oldest in this group. She was the daughter of Liz and Fred Chalmers and the granddaughter of Janie and Joe Black. At the time of the interview she was married to Kenny and had one daughter, Angela, aged three. She lived in Avonbridge, just over the road from her mother. Wendy had been born in Falkirk Infirmary in 1956 as had Michelle Drysdale a year later.

## **Michelle Drysdale**

Michelle was the eldest daughter of Joan and Mick Christie. She and her husband, Roger, had one daughter, Lynsey, aged two and a half when I visited them in their new council flat in Hallglen in 1980.

## **Cissie Davidson**

Cissie Davidson's Christian name must by now give away the fact that she was the daughter of Cissie II and Rob Campbell and the granddaughter of Cissie I and Hamish Bell. She was born in 1960 and lived in Carronshore, in a council house when I spoke to her - with her husband, Cameron, and daughter Amy, aged two - although she had been born in Falkirk and her mother, if we remember lived in Stenhousemuir.

## **Sue Day**

Next we have Sue Day, originally from Bainsford but living in Camelon at the time of my visit, in a council flat which she shared with her son, Andy, aged three. She is the odd one out in the group since her maternal relatives in preceding generations were not included in my 'sample'. She was born in 1960.

## **Kate Dickson**

The next girl down in descending age once again has a



Christian name which gives all the clues necessary as to her ancestry - Kate Dickson, nineteen going on for twenty, was obviously enough the daughter of Kate and Mark Cowan and the granddaughter of Kate and Wilf Brodie. She had moved to her husband's birthplace on marriage. They lived in a council house in Shieldhill, just round the corner from Cameron's mum. They had one daughter, Clare, aged ten months.

#### **Donna Dunn**

Lastly we come to Donna Dunn, the youngest of the group at nineteen. She was the granddaughter of Bella and Bob Bolton and the great granddaughter of our very first lady in this entire section and the oldest lady interviewed, Grace Anderson. Unfortunately Donna's mother was not interviewed to complete this multi-generational family because she was over in America for the whole length of my study.

#### **Childhood**

#### **Wendy Drake**

Wendy Drake was from Liz's family of five, she was the second child and the second daughter. She was quite aware that her childhood was a deprived one in the material sense with her dad not being in continuous employment, owing to him always being ill with ulcers, just as she was aware how hard her mother had

slogged away at jobs such as potato-picking, to keep the family at least ticking over.

M' mother's never had much but she's been clean. She's maybe only had a square o' carpet at times but it was spotlessly clean.

Wendy had been fanatical about housework from a very early age, having been influenced partly by her mother but more so by her great gran on her dad's side, Granny Machin or "Old Meg". In fact Wendy was often referred to in the family as "Old Meg's double". Wendy helped her granny with the housework from when she was three or four but particularly when she was at primary school.

Old Meg lived over the fence from the school 'n' me 'n' Angela used t' go there for our meals 'n' help her with the housework. On Thursday's we always got a penny caramel. Thursday was cleaning and polishing the cutlery. Tuesday used to be the day f' scrubbing the cooker. Y' had certain days f' certain things. M' gran also taught me t' sew, knit 'n' crochet, more so than m' mum. I always seemed t' be along at m' gran's. I went there from school cos m' mother lived further away.

Wendy loved primary school but hated secondary school. The transition from her village-type primary school in Avonbridge to the large secondary school in Falkirk was quite traumatic and confusing. Wendy found her teachers in Falkirk strict and intolerant. She said that they were continually "telling you y' were wrong but they didn't try to explain why". They made their pupils feel stupid but the trouble was that the kids had never

been adequately taught how to do the work in the correct way. Wendy didn't attend school very much for two reasons, the first being that she was ill a good deal with asthma and bronchitis, and the second being that she was frequently in charge of the household chores when her father was ill and her mother out working. While Wendy was at secondary school her mother worked shifts in the brickworks so Wendy's contribution was crucial since her father, besides being ill, was lazy in the house and her brothers were "useless".

The most significant event during Wendy's teenage years had been the death of her older sister, Angela, and its repercussions throughout the family. Wendy went into more detail of the tragedy than her mother could bear to. Angela had just started work at the supermarket when she died. For a very long time she had complained of stomach pains and although the doctor was convinced that she should have her appendix removed the hospital would not agree. The last time she was taken to the hospital with the pains it was too late for her appendix ruptured. Wendy said that her mother and father blamed the hospital for neglect to this day. The incident caused a lot of upset for a long time. Wendy's dad took to drink which was the worst thing he could do with stomach ulcers. Not only this, but he frequently went into rages through his drinking when he would throw things about the house and become quite violent. Wendy's mum was in such a state that she tried to commit suicide at the time.

I was always the ill person. Angela was always

well and cheery. Mum took t' bed after Angela died but the doctor told her to pull herself together for the others in the family. She couldn't have cared less at one time. She has a greet at times now, birthdays and New Year, but we've just learnt t' leave her.

Wendy was in a bad way herself after Angela's death for the shock of it all brought her asthma to a head and she was ill in bed for eleven weeks.

After Angela's death the family moved houses.

Up until then we lived in The Square. It was the place for big families - the Bells, the Murphies 'n' the Sloanes. It was what y' might call a "bad" place 'n' tough. I was a tomboy through living there 'n' played football rather than house.

### Michelle Drysdale

Michelle Drysdale was the oldest in her family and like Wendy she had a sister close to her in age but unlike her in character.

Mrs Connors, our teacher that I hated at primary school, said we were like chalk 'n' cheese. I was the toe-rag whereas Glynis carried her bag, things like that.

Michelle's first memories were of the people and books in her first year at primary school. She was pretty much a tearaway as a child, always fighting, usually to protect her 'little' sister who was rather more prim and proper. When she wasn't fighting for her sister she was fighting **with** her. During the



summer holidays, and frequently at weekends, both girls went to stay with their aunt in Rumford. She was the priest's housekeeper so as children they were very much connected with the Catholic Church of which they were practising members like the rest of the family.

Michelle attended St Mungo's Catholic secondary school where she continued to get into scrapes of one kind and another, mainly because there was little to interest her in the kind of education she received. She and her friends frequently skipped classes by simply sitting in the toilets, and their final year at St Mungo's was a complete waste of time. The teachers were clearly only interested in pupils who were taking Highers and the rest just spent their time cooking, knowing full well that they were being ignored by the system they were still forced to be part of. At this time Michelle and her pals often took off to the centre of town and sauntered round all day without the knowledge of their parents or the school.

The only thing that Michelle did become very involved in during her time at secondary school was a form of social work, in a group called the Falkirk Youth Volunteers. One Christmas the Social Services Department had organised the pupils from the school into collecting food to be distributed, in the form of small food parcels, to the old folks. After this had been successfully completed Michelle together with a few more of those involved decided to carry the practice a little further by organising some kind of on-going social activities for the old

people. They pooled what money they had and every second Wednesday, in the community hall in Bainsford, they held a dance for old age pensioners which started at seven and finished by half past nine. Musicians came in voluntarily and everyone was given a cup of tea. Michelle sang to the assembled audience and other members of the group put on various acts.

It was so rewarding, such a good feeling seeing them enjoying themselves. All they had t' do was put on their hat 'n' coat 'n' enjoy themselves.

The group of young volunteers started having meetings together and Michelle ended up becoming the secretary, responsible for such things as taking the minutes. It was during this 'job' that Michelle learnt to spell properly. Their enterprise took off so well that the Social Services Department found them a flat on Melville Street in which to hold their meetings. The kids decorated the place with carpet samples on the floor, wallpaper samples on the walls together with posters, and an old three piece suite and chairs. They kept the bedroom as an office. Because they were all still at school at the time they held their meetings in the evenings. Michelle loved it, loved the fact that she was doing something worthwhile and constructive for once in her life. One summer the group ran a play group with the help of two qualified social workers. It was a pity that when members of the group started going out to work and having dates the momentum was lost and the group finally fizzled out. Michelle said how much she would have liked a job

in that line but realistically perhaps decided that a caring attitude wasn't enough, "I expect y' have t' have degrees 'n' that".

### Cissie Davidson

Cissie Davidson's first memories were of primary school and the other children there. They weren't particularly happy memories for she was another person who had absolutely hated her time there. She said that the teachers were all right and one in particular had taken the time and trouble to teach her to draw properly. It was mainly the boredom of being stuck in the same class day after day that led to her intense dislike of the place. Fortunately Cissie's attitude of hate turned into one of love when she started secondary school but unfortunately this positive leaning towards education was just about obliterated by her being moved into a higher class where she was split off from her pals and left behind in the work, and by the attitude of her father.

M' dad expected an awful lot o' me. He was always, "Y've got t' do this 'n' do that t' get a job". He was drumming it in t' me that much I was determined not t' bother. I think it's natural t' do the opposite although y' ken it's f' y' own good --- He was keen on education 'n' thought y'd got t' stick in but there was no way I'd take my 'O' level if I wasn't in the mood 'n' I wasn't in the mood when the time came. M' dad had it all worked out that I'd be a fashion designer 'n' was right disappointed when I didn't get any 'O' levels.

Cissie's dad may have had his say about education but apart from that he didn't have much to do with his children.

Dad never said much, he never really took much t' do wi' us. Well, he kent we were there. When we were wee it was m' mother that was strict wi' us. She used t' leather us. But it was her that brought us up. She was in hospital once when we were all wee t' have her tonsils out 'n' she put us in a home while she was there so that we'd be properly looked after.

And almost echoing what her own mother had said of her situation as a child, Cissie went on,

I always thought m' mother 'n' father expected a lot o' me cos I was the oldest 'n' I always felt I had responsibility t' m' sister 'n' m' two brothers. Likes o' ... well, they're younger 'n' I was big sister, I had t' keep an eye on them 'n' I didn't feel I should do that. We all had t' go t' school together 'n' if mum 'n' dad were going out I had t' babysit from when I was about thirteen. I didn't mind s' much then but as I started gettin' older it didn't suit. Sue was a year younger 'n' she should have been made t' do it like I was. I wanted t' be out wi' m' pals but m' mum made me watch the bairns.

Despite the feelings revealed in the last quote Cissie well appreciated what her mother had gone through as a young girl. She was aware of the general situation regarding her grandparent's family and workload.

M' mother had five brothers and four sisters. She practically brought them all up, m' nanna was always wi' m' grandad. She almost brought them up 'n' I mean she never got oot cos she had t' always do work 'n' I mean there were days when she even got kept off the school t' do this, that, 'n' the next thing. M' nanna 'n' papa were always busy.



Although Cissie did look after her brothers and sister a good deal it was evident that she wasn't expected to do quite so much housework, or be quite as responsible for the general running of the household, as her mother had been. Cissie always washed the dishes and did some Hoovering and dusting, particularly on Saturdays when she helped her mother clean the house right through, after helping her do the week's shopping. But her general view of being at home as a teenager was that all the children took their mother for granted.

When we lived with mum we didn't do a thing, she did everything. She goes on about the hard times she had bringing us up but we didn't go without. I'm just beginning to realise what she meant. It hits y' all at once --- Mum's the organiser. I think m' faither realises how guid she is. He couldna do it. He trusts her t' do it. I think she's great the way she does that. She's good at advising me --- M' mum's guid in a lot o' ways. She works all the money out and writes a list out f' her outgoings. I do the same cos I've learnt. She puts her messages down on a list too 'n' doesn't get anything else. Mum's always been like that 'n' a'ways been a saver. M' mum's got a lot up there but she doesn't seem t' realise it. She's no 'O' levels or anything but she knows what she's about.

### Sue Day

Sue Day's first memories from childhood were running off with the boy next door to Dollar Park when she was four and he was six; getting locked in the coal cellar with her best white outfit on; and her father's parents, who'd gone to Australia when she was two, coming back to live in Scotland. Unlike everyone

else in this group Sue hardly mentioned school or childhood, apart from telling me of her special relationship with one of her cousins.

I came up with m' cousin Julie. We used t' be like sisters. She stayed in Bainsford 'n' I stayed in Bainsford. We did everything together --- I've no brothers 'n' sisters 'n' she was a great comfort t' me -- There was only nine months between us. She was the oldest 'n' had big brothers. We used t' go t' discos 'n' things with them when we were teenagers 'n' get somebody t' buy us a drink, cheap wine or cheap sherry. Crazy things!

Sue was a bit of tomboy as a child and played a lot with the boys on the Bainsford estate at games such as 'kick the can'. At the same time she developed early compared to her age group.

I was wearing a bra at eleven, y' know. Everybody's going around ping-pong, y' know, thinking it was the most exciting thing ever. They weren't wearing bras at the time --- Actually, I got the shock o' m' life - I started m' periods when I was eleven 'n' m' mother had never ... well, she didn't expect me starting at eleven. I was still at primary school. So I ran out that toilet screaming, y' know, I thought I had something terribly wrong. 'N' nobody explained t' me why y' were bleedin'. All they would say was, "Y'll have t' remember - don't go near boys". All m' aunts 'n' everything said that --- An older friend I had explained it t' me partly but m' mum's sister was training t' be a nurse 'n' I asked her about it 'n' she told me what happened 'n' everything. I never ever forgot it. She told me all about the fallopian tubes 'n' the ovaries 'n' the egg. Y' know, she thought I would never understand all this. But I thought it over 'n' over till I thought, "Ah, that's why y' don't go near boys! I couldn't talk t' m' mum about things like that. I could talk t' me dad easier. I was close t' m' dad. I don't know why. I think it was because m' dad always had the bad end of the stick from m' mum, y' know. She's a nag. She's really terrible. I feel sorry for him sometimes. There's no reason

f' her t' be like that.

Later, when at secondary level, Sue was told about sex at school. In the biology lesson they had a colour film about having babies which included diagrams showing the differences between men and women and how their bodies worked. On the whole judging from the girls and boys at her school Sue felt the film was a little late.

It's amazing how many non-virgins there were at twelve and thirteen. Most people were really inquisitive at the film cos they'd already had intercourse but then, y'd y' stupid person in the corner who thought that kissing or holding hands f' too long got y' pregnant!

#### Kate Dickson

Like Sue, Kate Dickson didn't speak much about her childhood.

T' be honest I canna mind much o' m' childhood. I vaguely remember being at primary school but I didn't like it. I never liked school. 'N' I can remember going t' Butlins every year but that's about all!

The main event in Kate's childhood was the unhappy one of her father dying. However, she was only eight at the time and barely remembered her father or his death.

I remember m' dad a wee bit but I was only eight when he died, Mark was ten. I remember this day we

all had breakfast 'n' then dad came back from work cos he'd forgotten something 'n' that was the last time we saw him. I knew what had happened but I didn't really understand. I never went to the funeral itself, we went to the cemetery the day after. Me 'n' Mark went t' stay at m' gran's f' a while 'n' then she stayed with us f' about a year but I can't remember any details about it. I know we moved houses after about a year cos m' mum couldn't stay in the one we'd been in when dad was alive. I didn't feel any different at school or anything because I had no dad.

### Donna Dunn

Donna Dunn 'lost' her dad as a child but this time through divorce rather death. Her father walked out when she was five and went off to London with his girlfriend but Donna couldn't remember him going. Her memories were all connected with how her mother reacted - "she gret f' days". Donna soon became aware of the details because "everybody knew". It turned out that her father said that he was going to night school, took his briefcase and scarpered to London. Donna had had a good relationship with her father up to that point and when he did return to the area some time later he tried to see her by waiting outside her school. However, she didn't want to see him at all because of what he'd done to her mother. She described this period of her life as an "awful time".

Donna and her mother lived on their own for a while after her dad left but it wasn't long after that that her mother's sister, Aunty Linda, also split up from her husband, Uncle Sam. As a consequence it ended up with the two sisters and their



respective daughters living together. Donna enjoyed this, saying they had "great fun". Linca had a daughter four years younger than Donna, Rose, and the two girls became more like sisters than cousins. As a small aside at this point the differences between Linda and Donna's mum's divorces were quite interesting. The circumstances surrounding each one led to very different family relationships after the event. Because of the way Donna's dad simply walked out none of her mother's family had anything at all to do with him but because Linda and Sam split up amicably Sam still went to Linda's mother's, Bella Bolton's, every day for his dinner since he worked over the road from her house. His wife visited frequently too.

When Donna's mother met Phil, who was to become her second husband, they left Scotland and went down to England to live, near Stockton. Donna was about nine or ten at the time and she adapted well to her new environment. They moved into a lovely private house with a big fish pond which Donna thought was "great". She liked the school she was sent to and made lots of good friends. However, the same could not be said of her mother.

It was hard times down there because mum didn't get on with the people there, with her being from a close family and being taken away. She used t' lie in her bed all day 'n' she wouldn't go f' messages. We all had t' go on Saturdays.

Donna's step-sister, Sally, was born while they were down in England but this didn't improve the situation and Donna had vivid

recollections of how it was eventually resolved.

In the end we did a moonlight flit from England in this horrible van. Sally had just been born 'n' we had seven rabbits 'n' I'd had seven teeth out that day 'n' I'll always remember the smell of blood, rabbits, 'n' the wain being sick in that van!

Donna said that Phil had been like a "right dad" and she always thought of him as her father. He wasn't at home very often because he worked as an off-shore welder and travelled all over the world with his job. At the time of the interview he was actually working offshore at Yarmouth.

Donna's mother worked for a while in a chemist after her father left but she didn't work after meeting Phil and Donna stressed that none of her aunties worked after they were married. Her mother and Phil had only been married a few years. Donna thought they'd been married ages before but her mother had simply changed her name to Phil's and they'd lived together, only getting married "for the sake of Michelle".

## Adolescence

### Wendy Drake

As a teenager Wendy Drake only had two boyfriends with the second one, Kenny, becoming her husband. She went around with boys rather more than girls but they were just pals from the street or her cousins. She said that her dad was "dead against

boyfriends" but he needn't have worried because Wendy spent most of her time up at Shieldhill with her cousins or tagged along with Angela. All they did was "hang about, we never done anything".

She met her husband-to-be, Kenny, at a disco. It was the time of the 'bovver boy' craze and she remembered she was wearing striped socks, braces and a Crombie coat which she'd bought out of someone's catalogue on weekly installments with the money her mother gave her for looking after the children. Kenny was from Westfield and was eighteen when they met. Wendy was nearly fifteen.

Kenny was the only boy I went out with seriously. I never bothered very much about that sort of thing. And we **never** indulged before we were married.

She summed up the beginning of their romance by saying that they "hung about at the corner and at the bus stop for a year and a half". Kenny went down to England at one point but they kept in touch by writing and when he returned he asked her to get engaged. Wendy was all for it but was frightened of what her dad's reaction would be so she put it off for about nine months until she was coming up for seventeen. Even then she put the ring on when she was going out with Kenny and took it off when she went home to save any bother with her dad. They ended up being engaged for almost three years during which time they saved up. They were married in 1975 when Wendy was nineteen.

I don't know what it is, upbringing or principles, but I believe in marriage. Mind you, I think times have changed. People are having boyfriends a lot younger and they're staying with one another. I couldn't have done that if I'd wanted to. You get a name f' yourself, especially in a small community like Avonbridge. Here they even know y're pregnant before y' know y'self.

Wendy and Ken were married in the register office because although Wendy would have liked a church wedding she wasn't "that fussy" whereas Ken was dead against <sup>it</sup> because he considered it would be too hypocritical with him not being a church member. Wendy had gone to Sunday school as a child and to church as a teenager but had never been since Angela's death which made her question her faith in God.

### Michelle Drysdale

Michelle left school early, in the November of her last year there, and helped her mother in the house. She started formal employment in the following January with a job in Havelock's. Her initial job was sewing buttons on blouses but she actually learnt two or three jobs which meant she could swap round so that her time there was less boring than it might have been. Even so she often got fed up and thought of finding another job but there were certain perks which she enjoyed like being able to make her own clothes from the left-over material in the factory. Also her sister, Glynis, followed her into employment there, acquiring her job because Michelle already worked there, "it was all families



that were there".

From the age of sixteen Michelle started going out to pubs and to the dancing at Bridgend, or to the ice rink with her girlfriend from White Cross. Their favourite haunt was a pub in Linlithgow Bridge and when Michelle was having her eighteenth birthday party she invited a good many of the crowd from the pub there, including Roger who was eventually, and after much trauma, to become her husband. She'd been out with Roger's friend at one point and asked him to bring Roger along because she fancied him. The plan seemed to be working when she got talking to Roger at the party until her ex-boyfriend Frank turned up and Roger assumed they were still together.

Michelle did end up going back with Frank for a while after that. He was a Protestant and his father wasn't pleased about the romance so when Michelle found out that Roger was also a Protestant she decided there wasn't much point following up the idea of going out with him because she didn't want to face the same hassles again. Her parents were very tolerant because since her mum had converted to Catholicism late in life half Michelle's relatives were Protestant and half were Catholic. She said that her parents would probably have preferred her to marry a Catholic simply because it would make life easier not because they were bigoted in any way. Michelle got an evening job in the bar at her favourite pub, serving and singing, not at the same time! A boy in the band who was nine years older than she was asked to

take her home and it was the start of a new six month romance.

Jimmy wasn't nice to look at really but he had a way of making me laugh. He had a great personality.

In the course of time somebody told her that he was married but he said that he was divorced and had two daughters. For the first time Michelle thought she was in love, Jimmy went to the house, and her mother liked him a lot. Meantime, Michelle was invited to sing with a band and although she was keen Jimmy objected because he thought the leader of it was a "con man". Anyway, Michelle went along to listen to the band and, while engaged in conversation afterwards, several of its members told her that Jimmy was married not divorced and what's more had four children and another one on the way. Michelle didn't want to end the romance but she confronted Jimmy with what she'd heard in no uncertain terms and he realised there was no use denying it.

I was speechless 'n' I couldn't be angry. I went home 'n' broke m' heart. M' mum was mad but I think she was mad at him not me.

Michelle and Jimmy did get back together a couple of times even after this but she realised that she would end up being the loser, and it wasn't long till she started going out with Roger, after one of her friends had managed to drop large enough hints to get them together, at least as far as the bus stop. Unfortunately, almost immediately after this Roger went to Spain and while he was there Michelle saw Jimmy for a drink. The story

was gossiped about and elaborated on until by the time Roger came back it had got out of all proportion and this new relationship almost bit the dust before it was started. However, reason prevailed in the end and they only fell out once after that because Michelle at one stage got fed up with the relationship. She changed her mind and since by this time they'd been going out together for three years they decided to get engaged. They would ideally have liked to get married quickly but Glynis was to be married in the June of that year and Michelle couldn't expect her mother to organise and pay for two weddings. Up until this point Michelle had remained a virgin.

Mum was strict and always said she'd kill us if we had t' get married. I was terrified. I was feared to let her down, not feared because of the hammering I might get. But I was stupid with Roger once while his mum was on holiday and I fell pregnant.

Michelle told Glynis and then Michelle and Roger met at her mother's to tell her, who looking at them both confronting her said, "Don't tell me yous are gettin' married" at which point Michelle started "greetin' 'n' mum guessed straightaway". She said that it would be all right and told them not to get married if they didn't want to, offering to adopt the baby or keep it until such time that Michelle wanted to marry. However, since they had been planning to get engaged and married they decided they'd see it through. Joan told Michelle that she could have a big wedding as long as she didn't get married in white. Michelle didn't really want an elaborate affair but her mother did so she

went along with it. Beforehand Roger had to receive instructions from the Catholic priest which wasn't too bad since they ended up talking about football for most of the time. Although it was a mixed marriage they were to receive the full service in the Catholic church. Michelle told the priest about her 'predicament' although she didn't have to, and he advised her and Roger not to get married simply for the sake of the baby. Michelle began to have serious doubts once more but she put this down to the fact that she was pregnant and when the actual wedding day arrived, by which time she was two and a half months pregnant, she was quite calm, apart from when the taxi arrived and when she walked down the aisle, feeling faint. Michelle and Roger had their first row on their wedding day because he never told her that she looked nice but they've been all right since.

### **Cissie Davidson**

When Cissie Davidson first left school she worked in the Clarendon Hotel but only for a short time because she 'got her books' for smoking in the dining room. From here she went into McCowan's sweet factory, beside her dad. She didn't want to work at McCowan's because her father also worked there and because she simply 'didn't fancy the place'. She was still hankering after being a gymnastics teacher which had been her great desire at school.

Mum 'n' dad didn't realise I was that good. Mum thought it was just something I'd got int' m' head.



I did think of joining the army at one time, t' be taught t' be a P.E. instructor.

In McCowan's Cissie worked as a machine operator on the sweet wrapping machine. She didn't actually hate the job but disliked it because it was so boring. Cissie was far more confident<sup>at</sup> work than she had ever been at school. She learnt that it was no good being shy and retiring if life was to at all bearable in a factory. On her very first day there one of the other girls knocked orange juice over her on purpose but luckily Cissie did the right thing by standing up for herself and from then on she had no more trouble of that sort.

Some o' the lassies were all right but some snapped y' head off --- I didn't let anybody take me or anyone else down. There were a load of gossips there 'n' I didn't like that; everybody's got faults. Y've got t' stand up f' y'sel' or they take y' f' a right silly sambo.

The people at the top of the management structure in the factory seemed to be fine but the supervisors lower down the scale were less than wonderful to their staff it seems. Cissie's life was made hell by one of the older women at work who 'had it in' for her and who became a 'pink hat supervisor'. In this position she used to continually shout and scream at Cissie who eventually told the woman she was a 'crabbit bitch' upon which she was taken to the manager's office for insubordination. It was eventually through the actions of this woman that Cissie left her job in McCowan's.

Cissie was married young, at eighteen, to Cameron whom she'd known for a year and a half. She'd actually had quite a few boyfriends but admitted that she was "awf' shy that way". After seeing Cameron for a month Cissie went on holiday to America with her father and when they returned Cameron asked her to get engaged. She refused at the time but agreed a few months later. She confessed that she wasn't very sure why she'd got married apart from a vague feeling that Cameron "should be there".

I dunna believe in love. I think when y're married y' grow t' love one another. It's a word I've never believed in. I'm no a romantic person at all. Even when I was wee I couldna stand anybody touching me. I couldn't kiss m' mum 'n' dad. I always wanted to but I couldna do it. I couldna understand it. I really did want to but I couldna bring m'sel' t' do it. I'm different now wi' Cameron. I don't believe in love at first sight or anything, he could be the Yorkshire ripper or something.

Cissie always thought that she would get married when she was about twenty-one and went on to say that she'd rather be married than simply living with someone because for one thing her mum and dad definitely wouldn't like her "living up" and for another she herself wouldn't feel secure and didn't feel it was fair on the children for people to remain unmarried. However, she did realise that times were changing and thought that marriage would eventually go out of date.

Sue Day

Sue Day had her first "proper" boyfriend when she was thirteen. He was the boy from across the road and he was fifteen. They used to go to and from school together and play kick the can and go bike rides.

That was the first experience for everything, the sex thing as well as the relationship. I was terrified the very first time. I didn't know what to expect. I'd be fourteen --- It was really painful. So when the opportunity came again t' do it I was even more scared than the first time.

Despite their youth and initial inexperience this relationship blossomed and Sue went out with Kevin for several years, "on 'n' off". They did things like camping out on the back garden at night, and got into scrapes, such as sneaking into Sue's parent's double-bed while they were away at a work's dance and falling asleep only to be awakened by her parents returning. With the result that Kevin had to hide in Sue's bedroom until he could sneak out the kitchen door. Sue finished with Kevin after her cousin, Joy, informed her that he was seeing another girl behind her back. At this point Sue was about fifteen and started going out to Grangemouth youth club, started meeting other boys and started thinking about contraception.

I thought if I was gonna have any relationship I'd be better t' get on the pill cos I'd been really lucky before cos I'd never used anything before then. I hadn't worried then because it was never gonna happen t' me. This is what I thought. Y' only read about it in the papers. Then I began t'

realise. It hit me all at once 'n' I runs t' the doctor 'n' gets the pill.

Before long Sue had swapped going to the youth club for going to a hotel in Grangemouth although she never went wild and got drunk because she "had to go home t' mum and dad". It was here that she met Steve, her future husband. She said it was at this time that it began to hit her about Kevin, and Steve was a shoulder to cry on.

I went with him f' six months, then stayed with him f' six months at just turned sixteen. We lived in digs in Grangemouth and decided t' get married. Mum 'n' dad thought I was mental at sixteen. They thought I was really crazy.

#### Kate Dickson

Kate Dickson started work at Havelock's factory when she left school but she didn't like it at all despite the fact that it was much better than school, it was a good job and she had a lot of friends there. She particularly hated getting up in the morning even though the factory was immediately opposite where she lived. Havelock's made clothes for Marks and Spencer's and Kate worked as an overlocker making waistbands. She started at 7.45 a.m. and worked till 4.20 p.m., with half an hour break for dinner, and stayed there for two years until she had her first child.

Kate's childhood had been marred by the death of her father,



Mark, and her teenage years were to be shattered by the death of her step-father, Len. She remarked that she was much more affected by Len's death, "we got on great and I just couldn't believe it", probably because she was older and able to understand the full meaning of such things. She was seventeen at the time of the tragedy and only five months previous to it she had been the bridesmaid at her mother and Len's wedding.

I was so pleased when mum married Len. I cried at the wedding I was so happy for her. I don't think she'll marry again.

A year later, Kate was to marry herself. Kate had had her first boyfriend at thirteen when she started secondary school but had met Ian, who was to become her husband, at a twenty-first birthday party when she was about sixteen. As a teenager Kate spent her leisure time going to parties, discos and the youth club. Sometimes she had to be in at certain times but mostly her mum was lenient, probably, Kate thought, trying to make up for the fact that she hadn't got a father.

Kate and Ian were married when she was eighteen and pregnant. When she found out about her condition Kate said that she was "pretty indifferent" about it herself, she was primarily concerned with what her mother would say. At the time Kate's gran, Kate Brodie, was staying with them and so Kate told her, and she in her turn told Kate's mum. Her gran actually said that she'd guessed before she'd been informed and her mum didn't take it too badly. Although her first reaction was, "you've made y'

bed y' can lie on it" she helped Kate and Ian so much that Kate couldn't imagine how they'd have managed without her. And the same went for Ian's parents. Kate Cowan went up to see Ian about the matter but assured him that "she wasn't up with a gun at his head". However, Kate and Ian pointed out that they had been planning to get engaged in September, obviously with a view to marriage. So, instead of these plans, they were married in October and engaged at Christmas. The wedding ceremony was held in church with the bride wearing a champagne wedding dress complete with veil. Like Michelle Drysdale's mother, Kate Cowan had told her daughter that while it was fine to marry in church despite being pregnant it was not on to marry in white. Kate's brother, Mark, gave her away since they had no father.

### **Children and Married Life**

#### **Wendy Drake**

After Wendy and Kenny were married they stayed with Wendy's mum and dad for a year which Wendy rather enjoyed. After her marriage Wendy took up a job for the first time in her life. She started work in the Co-op, just down the road from her mum's, where she remained until she was four months pregnant.

Wendy was quite worried throughout her pregnancy although she wasn't frightened during labour or the actual birth. During her pregnancy she had suffered from sickness and high blood

pressure, besides which she found doctor's examinations very embarrassing. Also, at the back of her mind she had the memory of her mother having a breach baby at home which died. She could remember them taking the baby away in a bag. Her mum had never told her anything about pregnancy, she assumed that Wendy knew. And Wendy did make out that she knew everything to avoid any embarrassing discussions.

Kenny was present at the birth of Angela which was pretty awful even though Wendy claimed she wasn't too bothered by it all. First of all, when she reached the hospital, they didn't believe she was in labour and gave her sleeping pills which prolonged the whole business and meant that eventually it was a forceps birth and Wendy had to have stitches.

Angela never slept as a baby so Wendy had quite a difficult time, especially since Kenny was unable to be there through the night because he worked as a milkman and started his work at half one or two in the morning. However, Wendy said that she really liked looking after Angela, she never got fed up and would like another baby. The only thing putting her off was the thought of being sick for nine months again.

Wendy, Kenny and Angela seemed to have a happy and contented life together when I met them. Kenny was still a milkman and Wendy was a school cleaner. They had a beautiful house which they rented from the council. Kenny was quite a wizard at do-it-yourself and Wendy kept the place immaculately clean and tidy.

She stressed how good Kenny was in the house, not only making furniture, etc. but also baking pies and things, "really different t' m' dad". Angela who was only three at the time was already helping in the house, washing dishes and making her bed not because Wendy asked her to, or expected her to, but just because "she wanted to do it".

Wendy said that she was trying to bring Angela up the way she'd been brought up, with the most important value being truth on both sides. Wendy greatly respected her mother for always telling them as children what she could afford for them and what she couldn't. This honesty had been a great help to Wendy in later life when, like Liz Chalmers, she found herself in charge of the family's money.

I'm adjusted to waiting f' things 'n' looking after money from m' upbringing. We never had much but what we had we had t' look after. If I can't afford something I wait till I've saved. Money's scarce so we're just building up.

### **Michelle Drysdale**

After Michelle and Roger were married they were unable to get a house and so they stayed with Michelle's family for about seven months. They were married in October and got the keys to a house the following March, three weeks after Michelle and baby Lynsey came out of the Infirmary.



The thing that Michelle had hated most about her pregnancy had been going backwards and forwards to the hospital to take samples in order to work out dates correctly. Apart from that her ante-natal days were trouble-free and when she started in labour she never even realised.

At six o' clock in the morning I told Roger 'n' m' mum that I had pains but I thought it was diarrhoea. I imagined y'd be literally rolling about with labour pains. I had no 'show' and no water breaking but mum came int' my bed and decided I was in labour. She started pullin' her rollers out 'n' phoned Roger, who'd gone off t' work, and the ambulance. I was taken int' hospital at five t' ten and the baby was born at twenty-five past.

After the baby was born Michelle went back to her mother's. Joan absolutely loved babies and got up early every morning to bath and feed the baby so that Michelle could have a long lie. But it was after the baby was born that Michelle's troubles started because she was very depressed, mainly, she thought, because they didn't have a house of their own. However, even when they did move the post-natal depression remained, "I just used t' sit 'n' cry". It was so bad that Michelle went to tell the doctor but when she got there she couldn't bring herself to talk about her problem. On top of everything she thought she was pregnant again but was relieved to find that it was her worrying that had made her period very late. After this episode and in spite of her religion she started taking the pill.

We're not supposed t' take precautions, that's probably why m' mum's got five. But the Pope doesn't need t' bring up the bairns 'n' manage on

the money. Women need a break from having children. Even if y' health depended on getting sterilised y're still supposed t' have permission from the church but I'd just do it. A lot don't take notice now. I've never confessed t' being on the pill because I don't see it as being a sin. Anyway, now George is getting paid off and so am I. M' mum says that God'll only send y' what y' can look after. She wouldn't go on the pill but this attitude hasn't rubbed off on me or Glynis. I try t' make her understand it's a different age and ask her if she'd do things that m' great granny did.

As indicated in the quote, at the time when I met Michelle and Roger they were both about to lose their jobs. Roger worked at the brickworks and had only been there a year and a half when they announced that they were closing down. He had previously had a relatively secure job in a paper-mill which he had left in order to earn better money. He was going to see if they'd have him back since he was not in a strong position in the job market through not having a specific trade. Recently, Roger had had to start night-shift at the brickworks which both he and Michelle hated.

The only advantage was that Michelle had access to the car all day and could fetch her mum and go out. She loved driving and made much of the fact that her driving test was the only thing she'd ever passed in her life. She had passed a year previously and "felt like kissing the examiner" she was so pleased. Driving had given her ego a very big boost for she was good and confident behind the wheel. Just after Michelle passed her test she and Roger had won a thousand pounds, so with that and a loan they were able to buy a car. Michelle said that she

wished that she'd given the money to each set of parents for all their help at the beginning of their married life but they had told Michelle and Roger that repayment was unnecessary and to go ahead and buy a car. It was as a result of having to repay the loan they had taken out that Michelle had taken an evening job as a cleaner which was also about to come to an end as more cleaners were laid off.

It was true that after Michelle and Roger were married they had an immense amount of help from both families of origin. To begin with they did especially well for wedding presents. Roger's parents bought them a cooker and table and chairs while Joan and Mick bought them a three-piece suite and a bed. The only main items they didn't have when they moved to their flat were a washer and dryer but Michelle was able to buy those with the year's money she received from the social security after the birth of Lynsey.

When they lived with Joan she initially refused to take any housekeeping money from them, telling them that she'd manage while they saved, but eventually ten pounds for the two of them was agreed upon. They saved the rest. When Lynsey was born they were once again showered with gifts, including a unit for her bedroom which Roger's dad bought. Roger had been off work with a broken arm for a while earlier in the year and once again both sets of parents had come running with "bags of messages, fillet steak and everything" and "bits of money", saying, "Take what y' get, we're wanting t' help". It was help that was much

appreciated but Michelle wanted to be independent without hurting anyone's feelings.

Michelle's main preoccupations in life were going to church and going to her mum's. She was bringing Lynsey up as a Catholic, which Roger didn't mind as long as he didn't have to go to church. He took them to mass every Sunday morning and then went to the pub.

We never mention religion between us. He's not really religious. At least, he knew about me being a Catholic for the three years we were going together so it wasn't a shock that I went to church.

Michelle saw her mum a great deal, always on Sundays and Thursdays and frequently in between. Joan had just been away to Spain for her holidays at the time of my interviews with the family and Michelle had missed her so much that she'd told her not to "leave" her again. In fact, Michelle, Roger and Lynsey had been to stay with Joan for a week on her return from holiday. Michelle also saw her grandmother frequently, her mother's mother. She and Roger went up sometimes twice a week and when they didn't go up she phoned regularly to see how gran was because she had recently suffered a heart attack.

**Cissie Davidson**

Cissie and Cameron lived with Cissie's family for four



months after they were married until they got their own council house in Stenhousemuir. The original arrangement had hardly been satisfactory because Cameron and Cissie's father wouldn't sit in the same room as each other. Consequently Cissie and Cameron spent most of their time in their room upstairs where they had a telly.

M' dad doesn't like Cameron. When we go up now he doesn't even turn his head. He won't speak to him. He just doesn't like him. M' father won't talk t' me much either, we just can't talk t' one another. Cameron goes on at me about it but he won't speak t' m' faither. Sometimes I feel terrible about it.

At least when she got older Cissie got on exceptionally well with her mother and her sister. During adolescence Cissie and her mother argued all the time, "at the least wee thing" but things had changed.

M' mother's great, she'd blether wi' anybody. I mean we goo oot as often wi' m' mother 'n' we have a great time. I like going out wi' m' mother 'n' that, I know we're going t' have a good laugh 'n' I'm going t' enjoy m'self. M' faither goes his different way. A lot o' folk say that shouldna be but m' mum likes t' get oot 'n' mix wi' folk --- I'd like t' be the way m' mum is cos when she goes oot or when anybody comes t' the hoose she can sit 'n' blether. I can't think what t' say but it comes naturally t' m' mum. M' dad's awf' reserved whereas m' mum's a happy-go-lucky person. I'm like m' faither that way though.

It did transpire that Cissie's father wasn't as bad as he sounded, it was more the way his attitude and manner were interpreted because he was one of these people who only had a lot

to say if there was something worth saying, about a topic he was interested in. He wasn't a gossip and didn't talk for talking's sake.

Despite being more naturally like her father Cissie did consciously try to be like her mother.

I try t' be like her in lots o' ways cos I think a lot o' her now. I like t' keep the house clean 'n' things like that because she did.

Cissie wasn't frightened when she was pregnant although she'd always thought she would be.

I used t' think about it all the time when I was wee 'n' I could never picture m'sel'. Oh no! I couldn't see m'sel' gettin' married far less having a bairn. It scared me when I was wee but it never bothered me at the time. I don't think it sank in, probably because I didn't start showing till I was five or six months. I started labour at m' mum's while we were all having a meal. M' mum phoned the ambulance but I didn't have any pain. The only time I got feared was in the labour ward. I never thought about it 'n' it never hit me till then. But Cameron was there all the time 'n' that was better.

Cissie said that she loved having the baby and looking after her and although she admitted that she often got bored or fed up during the day she easily remedied her mood either by going a walk to her mum's, "I'm always walking up 'n' down t' m' mum's", or keeping herself <sup>busy</sup> clearing out the cupboards or something. Cameron helped her with the baby and would help with the

housework if asked but Cissie didn't expect him to when he was at work.

Cissie had had her job at the sweet factory kept open for her after the baby's birth but had decided not to go back, preferring to stay at home and look after Amy. She seemed particularly perturbed by the fact that when her sister, Anna, had gone back to work and her mother had looked after Stephen he had started calling his grandma "mum". Cissie didn't fancy this happening to her and her child. Eventually Cissie planned to have more children.

I always said I'd have two children, a boy 'n' then a girl. I wanted a boy the first time 'n' I was sure it was. T' be honest I was a bit disappointed at first but I wouldn't swap her now. In fact, I'd like another lassie now.

Cissie wanted her next child in about three years time but wasn't keen on staying on the pill, mainly because she continually forgot to take it. She was keen on having a coil fitted but unfortunately Cameron was totally against the idea, his reasoning being that if this was carried out Cissie wouldn't have any more children. No matter how much Cissie tried to reassure him that this was not in fact the case he wouldn't listen.

Cissie spent a good deal of her time in quite philosophical thought, mainly concerned with dying, which probably stemmed from the fact that her maternal grandmother had talked to her about death a lot when she was a child and also the recent death of her

Aunt Catherine. However she also gave much more down-to-earth questions a good deal of thought.

I think so much these days that I could shoot myself. I'm there. "What would folk think if I done this, what would m' mum think 'n' m' dad think?" Then I think, "It's up t' me". I talk t' myself if there's something on m' mind. It's like there's two folk inside talking away, the good 'n' the bad.

Cissie thought about death both in a personal sense and a more global sense. She was particularly concerned about the thought of her mother dying and the thought of being a survivor after a nuclear war.

M' mum talks about dying. M' aunty dying brought it on. Mum 'n' dad had a discussion. M' dad said he'd remarry but m' mum wouldn't. I often worry about m' mum dying. I'd be lost without her. I go up most days. I've seen me 'n' Cameron talking about things like that 'n' he thinks I'm off m' head. I even think about m' grandpa 'n' m' grandma 'n' m' nanna. The man across the road from m' mum died and he was the same age as her. I gret 'n' that was a stranger --- I've an awful feeling this world's going to end. I'm worried that I won't see my baby grow up. I don't think we'll see the year 2000. Everybody laughs but we can't afford t' have another war. Cameron doesn't let anything bother him. If anything terrifies me it's this world ending. I've always thought about that. There was a scare on recently and I was worried I wouldn't experience childbirth.

Sue Day

Although all the women in this group had married quite young, and all but one had been pregnant on their wedding day,



they all appeared at the time of my interview to be settled and reasonably happy with their lives and their husbands and children, all that is except for Sue Day who had lived through years of hell by the time she was twenty.

After Sue and Steve were married they had gone to live with Sue's mum and dad. Shortly afterwards, Sue discovered one of the many truths to be discovered about her new husband.

After I got married I found out he was on a charge in England some place. He was t' go t' Manchester on a charge. He had broke int' this warehouse long before I knew him 'n' robbed about sixty thousand pounds worth of goods --- We'd only been married a week 'n' he went away down there 'n' got six months imprisonment. But it seemed when he'd first got charged he'd spent three months in prison so he got three months taken off his six months.

Steve was imprisoned in September and was due out in the November. During this time Sue managed to acquire a council house and continued working in the factory. She didn't visit Steve because it wasn't worth the journey to Manchester for a two hour visit but they wrote to each other. Every Friday, when the factory finished at one o' clock, Sue went to see Steve's mother and it was here that she started finding out more about his past. Mrs Day started telling Sue that Steve had been engaged before but the girl involved had ended the relationship because Steve had "battered" her. Such things had never been mentioned before Sue married him.

I mean this was the great cover-up. This was the amazing thing. I mean, for some reason he wanted t' get married 'n' for some reason everybody kept quiet about what happened before 'n' I still don't know why. None of his friends or his ex-fiance, who I'd met without realising it, had said anything about this. His sister knew 'n' she never, ever, ever said anything about it either.

Despite what she heard with her own ears Sue was dubious of what Steve's mother told her, saying,

Well, his mother was an alcoholic and was divorced. She had a pill f' every day of the week. Y' know, she had a pill f' sore toes, 'n' t' make y' go t' the toilet 'n' no make y' go t' the toilet!

So, bearing in mind what she knew of Mrs Day generally, she decided to give Steve the benefit of the doubt. When he came out of prison she told him about what she'd heard but he denied it all, saying that his mother and his sister had lied. Sue chose to believe Steve rather than them. When he returned home they seemed to be getting on fine until one weekend, while they were out drinking in a hotel, they met one of Sue's friends, Debbie, who asked them to move over and join her. For some reason, Steve took extreme exception to this, threw a beer bottle at the girl and split her head clean open. Sue went with Debbie to the hospital; Steve was thrown in a cell for the night. Sue was quite frightened by this incident because what Steve's mother had said was beginning to have some relevance,

But he always said he would never hit me and I believed that. I believed him. I thought this was the be all and end all - that I was married 'n'

settled in my own house 'n' had a job. Quite happy.

To complete her happiness Sue found out, in the January after Steve had come out of prison, that she was pregnant. She had stopped taking the pill while her husband was away and never bothered to start again. At the same time Steve's sister announced her engagement and so the four of them went out for a joint celebration, followed by coffee at Sue and Steve's. Back at the house Steve started accusing Sue of making eyes at Karen's fiance just because she'd had two dances with him earlier in the evening.

So he started punching me in the face 'n' I started screaming 'n' he pushed me 'n' I fell 'n' he started kicking at m' back till Karen's boyfriend managed t' get him off me. The next day I was in hospital, had a miscarriage --- he was really sorry f' it 'n' everything but he knew it was his fault --- I would never let him come near me cos he had murdered my baby ... I mean, this was my baby 'n' he'd killed it.

After this Sue went back on the pill but Steve flushed them all down the toilet, and if she went to the doctor's he went too to make sure she didn't get any more. He was still unemployed and Sue had left her job after the miscarriage. At one point, not long after the beating she received Sue did leave Steve but he kept phoning and promising never to do it again so because she still loved him she went back again and once more she fell pregnant. They still hadn't been married a year. Sue also managed to get a new job, this time in Havelock's factory beside

her mother. However, all that apart Steve continued to beat her up frequently.

He'd come in 'n' he'd just beat me up. Like he'd say, "Turn the telly over" 'n' I wouldn't so I'd get a black eye f' it.

Over a period of months she suffered black eyes, split lips, a split head, serious bruising and cracked ribs but she covered up for him to people like her mum and dad, continually made excuses. Besides the violence he also started seeing other women and Sue didn't want anything to do with him. Yet, she didn't feel she could keep running back to her parents and then go back to Steve, particularly since at one point she had started to extricate herself from the situation by starting divorce proceedings but then dropped them again. Her new strategy was to do everything that Steve asked her to do. This 'worked' and they started getting on fine so that Sue began saying to herself,

Well, it must have been my fault. It really must've been my fault because now I'm doing everything right I'm not getting beat up.

Consequently, for the first three or four months of her second pregnancy, Steve did Sue no harm but it couldn't last and in the fourth month he threw her down the common stair from the fourth storey flat where they lived. Sue started bleeding and had to spend two weeks in hospital, lying completely flat in order to avoid another miscarriage.



Then when she was six months pregnant Steve ordered her to go to his mother's to fetch him cigarettes but she refused and he went himself. Sue paid for her refusal at 12.30 that night when he returned. He put her over the balcony, left her hanging by her knees and went off to bed. By some miracle Sue managed to drag herself back up to the balcony but she could no longer feel the baby and believed he had killed it. He hadn't but for the next three months Sue worried herself half to death about whether the baby had been damaged in any way. She slept in the spare room which they had decorated for the baby, with money from her parents and then for the last two weeks of her pregnancy both Sue and Steve stayed with her parents. Typically, the night Sue went into labour Steve was at a darts match and her mum had to take her to hospital. When he did get to the hospital the next day to see his wife and new baby he was drunk.

After the birth of their son, Andy, Sue and Steve went back to their own house but now life became even more difficult for Sue because Steve would not allow her to bath Andy in front of the fire because he said that he got cold if she did, not being able to feel the heat, and he would not allow her to dress the baby in the living room in case he cried. Therefore Sue had to attend to Andy in a very cold bedroom. The only time Steve had any time for the child was when he came home drunk from the pub at one or two in the morning, at which time he'd wake Andy then quickly get bored with the whole business and leave him to Sue to get back to sleep.

All this time, whilst neither Sue nor Steve were working, they had neglected to pay their bills and had been threatened with disconnection by both the gas and electric boards whereupon Sue sensibly decided she would have to go to the Social Work Department to see what help she could get there. She asked Steve if he would watch Andy while she went and sorted the whole business out but he refused and what's more threatened her that if she did leave the baby in the flat it would be dead when she returned. At long last Sue made a decision. She told Steve that she would take the baby with her when she went but would wait until he woke up before doing so. However, this was a play for time during which she gathered all Andy's clothes and food together. Steve was still in bed so she simply poked her head round the door and told him that she and the baby were on their way to the Social Work Department and that she'd bring back sausages and rolls for breakfast.

Well, I walked to Falkirk from Grangemouth, pouring rain, 'n', y' know, I sang all the way going up that road. It was great, y' know. I had all these bags o' clothes, all his baby food, 'n' everything 'n' I'm going up like this t' Falkirk. And all these cars were splashing 'n' I couldn't care less. I had a silly wee jacket on 'n' I was really happy.

Sue went to a friend's in Bainsford for the day but her friend had two children and so she and Andy couldn't expect to stay there for any length of time. Her next port of call was the Samaritans.

By that time the rain had stopped and it was beginning t' get a bit clearer 'n' everything else was gettin' clearer as well.

The Samaritans immediately referred Sue, and her problems, next door, to Women's Aid who wasted no time at all in getting Sue and Andy into a refuge in Stirling and eventually into one in Falkirk. Meantime, Steve was frantically running round to Sue's mother's and all her friends but she got herself a lawyer and took out the necessary interdict and custody order.

By the time I interviewed Sue her divorce was only two weeks away from becoming absolute although there had been a last minute hitch when Steve had suddenly decided to challenge the custody order. At the time he had two hours access a fortnight, through Sue's good nature not through a court decision, but he wanted this changed to access every Friday from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Sue was convinced that this was Steve's latest ploy to try to find out where she lived since the existing arrangement was that he pick Andy up from and take him back to the Women's Aid office but if he had the child longer he would necessarily have to take him home. Sue knew that Steve had another girlfriend living with him in a house with no electricity or gas and she did not want Andy in such an atmosphere any longer than necessary.

When I spoke to Sue it had been over a year since she and Steve had split up, during which time she said that she'd had a couple of male friends but had no intention of "getting

involved".

I mean I did all this house ... well, m' cousin did the papering ... but I've kept it going all m'self, without any debt at all. It's been quite hard really. I'm no gonna let any man walk over me again. If any man's gonna come here they're gonna be here on my terms no their's --- People have told me that f' someone who's twenty year old I'm awf' old in mind, y' know. I'm quite definite about what I'm doing. I canna afford t' make the same mistake twice. I mean it wouldna stop me going out wi' boys. I mean, it's not put me off men. It's just put me off one man.

As she points out herself, Sue was only twenty but in her thinking she was in many ways very mature. She was reasonably happy and contented, and also independent and secure in the knowledge that she had certain things in her life worked out.

Andy's all I've got at the moment 'n' I'm no looking f' anything else. I'm quite happy the way I am. My world is centred round him. I can do my own thing when he's at nursery school, I can do what I want. I've no man to come home to demanding this, that or the next thing 'n' there's no way I'd ever do that again, y' know, but I think the male population expect a woman t' get 'MINE' stamped on her forehead 'n' that's it. I don't want t' be anybody's property --- I realised that a woman is not something that wipes the floor 'n' does the dishes all the time. A woman should be what she is - a woman. I'm very proud t' be a woman.

Despite her rather outspoken views, Sue made it clear that she would only describe herself as liberated "up to a point" because she said that she would never go writing on placards, and bringing up a male person she didn't feel she could go too far along the liberated road. In the context of liberation she made



an interesting comment about her mother and probably all women of her mother's generation.

M' mother's worked all her life. I mean she's a liberated person but she doesn't realise it. She's a 'woman' that's how she classes herself but I mean she's worked, she's got her own money, she's got her own life. Like she doesn't have t' ask m' dad if she can do this or that, y' know, which is what I had t' do.

### Kate Dickson

Like all the other girls so far, Kate, together with Ian, stayed with her mother after her marriage. Her mum was extremely sorry when they decided to leave because although Mark was still there at that time she couldn't 'blether' to him like she could to her daughter. Kate and Ian moved to live with Ian's parents in Shieldhill in the hope of obtaining a council house there which was Ian's main ambition in life. He didn't want to leave the place of his birth. After several months they were lucky enough to get council house to rent, just round the corner from Ian's parents. Kate said that she liked Shieldhill, "it's a friendly place", but would have preferred somewhere nearer to Falkirk and her mum.

When Kate was pregnant Ian was really worried all the time in case there was anything wrong with the baby but Kate herself never worried. She wasn't frightened and she suffered no problems, not even morning sickness. She carried on working

until she was six months pregnant. When her labour pains started Ian ran for his mother and his uncle took Kate to the hospital. The labour lasted a long time, from nine in the morning to eight at night, but Kate said that she could hardly remember the experience because she'd had so many injections, something she wasn't unduly concerned about.

I'd never thought about looking after a house 'n' a baby, and I couldn't believe I was having a wain , when I went in t' have her.

However, Kate liked being a housewife and looking after the baby. She certainly preferred it to working in Havelock's although she did sometimes get fed up with not having enough young company around, something she didn't suffer from at work. In terms of future plans Kate said that she would like more children but would also like a "good holiday".

I like children and I want two. Mark gets married next year and I'd quite like one for his wedding. But the four of us have decided we'd like t' go t' Tenefrife for our holidays. If we don't go there then we'll probably have another baby.

Once again for practical reasons, Kate said that she'd like her second baby to be another girl. This would mean that they wouldn't have to move which they would eventually have to do if their children were different sexes because then they'd need another bedroom and also they'd already have plenty of clothes for a baby girl and wouldn't have to buy more.

Donna Dunn

Donna Dunn started going out with the boy who was to become her husband when she was thirteen. They met at the ice rink but they were both at school, the relationship was on and off, and she never thought at the beginning that they'd end up getting married. When Donna left school, she started work as a trainee hairdresser at a salon called Mr Lesley's which was in Ladysmill. She liked the work a lot but hated Mr Lesley and although she was supposed to be there training for three years she left after a year and a half when she discovered she was pregnant.

I think deep down I tried t' get pregnant as an excuse t' leave.

Donna wasn't surprised at being pregnant and she certainly wasn't bothered since it was so much more desirable than being at work, and anyway,

Gettin' pregnant before marriage runs in the family. M' mum was sixteen when she had me 'n' a lot of people think we're sisters. A lot of people can't believe she's a granny cos she could still be having children herself, 'cept m' dad's been sterilised.

Talking of her own pregnancy, Donna said she thought that even her mum and dad expected it since she and John had spent so much time together, mainly at each other's houses, and her mum "had never minded" her going out with him. John had had several

jobs but at one time he worked at the hospital where his shift finished at ten o' clock whereupon he'd go round to Donna's to<sup>watch</sup> telly. It usually ended up that the pair of them would fall asleep until about three or four in the morning when he'd leave for home and Donna would sneak upstairs to bed, often sleeping in her clothes so as not to wake anyone.

At the time when Donna discovered she was pregnant John, who was twenty-one, was working off-shore on the same rig as her step-father. She wrote to John telling him about the pregnancy but the letter arrived after he'd left the rig to head back to Scotland. Since it was well-known that John was the fiance of Phil's step-daughter, Phil was given the letter which he promptly read. Phil was O.K. about the 'news' and he told Donna's mum who was also all right about it despite Donna thinking "she'd have me by the neck". Her parents got quite carried away with the whole affair and dashed off to buy things, including a cot and a pram.

We got married in the register office. M' mum 'n' that didn't go. We just went 'n' got married. I didn't want any fuss or a reception. I thought like that at the time cos I was pregnant but I regret it now. I would have loved a church wedding even though I was pregnant but I didn't think it was the done thing. Since then though a lot of m' friends who've got pregnant have had church weddings. That's scunnered me! I was the first in line, y' see 'n' I didn't realise I could have got married in church. That sickens me now. I realise that in this day 'n' age nobody bothers if y're pregnant or not. There's that many people like it.

When I interviewed Donna she was staying in her mum's house because her mum had gone to America with her Aunty Linda, who had



moved there to live with her new husband who originated from Texas, and her stepfather was working off-shore. Donna spent most of her time round at her gran's, Bella Bolton's. She and the baby went round every day for lunch and spent the afternoon there..

## CHAPTER TEN

### ALL CHANGE?

I now want to sum up what it is that has been learnt about generational time from this plethora of ethnographic detail. What have the detailed individual life histories of these women taught us about phases and transitions over the life course - childhood, adolescence, marriage and motherhood - as they have changed throughout the twentieth century in relation to changing familial and historical circumstances?

Social change is lived, not by social structures or abstract theory, but by individuals. The stories of their lives inevitably traverse the boundaries between family and economy, public and private, male and female ... They provide us with a unique means for documenting the connections between social and economic structures at one end, and personal character at the other, through the mediating influences of parents, brothers and sisters, neighbours and kin, school and church, newspapers and <sup>the</sup> media. (Thompson 1984: 520-521)

It is evident that the similarities between the generations are much more striking than any dissimilarities. To highlight this fully I intend in this section to look at the first three generations together and then compare them with the fourth generation which grew up after the two world wars, the

introduction of secondary schooling and the raising of the school leaving age, the introduction of the modern welfare state and the dawning of the affluent society, as a consequence of which it would be reasonable to suppose that it would be members of this generation who displayed the most significant changes in their life course.

Because the ethnographic component of my work has been so long and dense, and further because a certain amount of repetition of my own findings is necessary in the present discussion, I feel that more of the same would be undesirable. Therefore, in this chapter while I will indicate where other authors have discussed similar topics as the ones I cover I will not give specific examples from their texts.

## **Childhood time**

### **Three Generations Together**

#### **Introduction**

Experiences at the beginning of the life course were very similar for members of the first three generations. The majority of women had been born into large families living in small dwellings. Life was characterised by an acute awareness not so much of dire poverty as of the very hard struggle of both parents to make ends meet and constant encounters with death and illness. During childhood familial considerations took precedence so that

girls, particularly those who were eldest or second eldest daughters, received little in the way of formal education which had to be subordinated to the needs of the family. In practice this meant that girls had to carry out a good deal of hard and vital work both inside and outside the home from a very early age. (Jamieson 1983, Roberts 1975, Thompson 1981, Harevan and Langenbach 1978). This situation was exaggerated if any member of the family was ill or if one or both parents were dead. Family and community discipline was strict, and the principle moral virtue taught to children was that of honesty. This obedience and truthfulness was re-emphasised by the churches and Sunday schools of which the majority of young girls were members.

### Home and Hearth

Childhood and family time took place in the context of limited spatial conditions. Everyone in the first three generations had started their lives in a room and kitchen, usually rented from a private landlord, and most had continued to live in such accommodation until well into their married lives. 'A room and kitchen' literally consisted of two rooms often located in a 'building' or a tenement. One room was a bedroom and the other a living room which was loosely described as 'a kitchen'. I say loosely, because kitchens frequently had no sink and no running water. People washed themselves and their dishes in bowls on the table top, with water fetched in a pail from a



pump, tap or well in the yard or back-green. Furnishings were sparse, compact and practical. Bedrooms usually contained two large beds which the children slept in, one bed for girls and one for boys, and kitchens had a set-in bed where parents spent their sleeping hours. Also in the kitchen there would be a scrubbed wooden table and chairs, perhaps a sideboard and a range, or sometimes just a gas ring, for cooking. Floors were wooden boards sometimes covered with lino and rugs. Laundry, in every case that I encountered, was carried out in a washhouse - comprising of tubs, a boiler and washboards - situated in the back-greens of the tenements and shared by the tenants. Often children were bathed in here rather than in the tin bath on the hearth of the fire. Washhouses were not the only things shared in tenements - usually toilets were too. They tended to be dry closets located on the common stair. Hardly any of the dwellings in question had an electricity supply and relied on coal or gas for heating and cooking, and paraffin and gas for lighting.

### **Immediate Families**

The families of origin of the majority of the women cited here were very large. In the first generation Connie's family of origin of fifteen children was the largest, followed by that of Maisie which had twelve children, those of Edith and Amy with ten, Mary's with nine and Grace's with eight. Only Nellie's family of origin could be described as small, though it still had four children, probably, as already indicated, for reasons to do with her mother's profession as a nurse.

Coming to the second generation, Kate was from a family of twelve children, while Norah and Lucy were from families with eight offspring. Bella was from Grace's family of three which would have been double that if all the children had survived. Cissie (4) and Janie (2) were from much smaller families owing to the fact that during their childhood they had lost both their parents.

Even by the time we reach the third generation large families were not unusual. Cissie II's family of origin was the largest, having twelve children, followed by those of Joan with seven, Norah five and Bella four. Kate III's family of origin only contained her and her brother but she actually spent her entire childhood living with her granny who had twelve of a family, seven of whom were still living at home when Kate was there. Talking of families at the time she was a child Hannah remarked,

Everybody had big families. The one at the top o' the road had seven, then the next door eight, then seven and ten. They were big families then. It was a funny thing that. There was very few that had two or three. Five was counted as a medium family. When I think I've had five and I've had a big family.

Similar remarks were made by most women in the first three generations, and talking specifically of the tradition of large families within her extended family Lucy observed,

We all had families, y' know. M' mum's folks all had big families 'n' I was fond o' wains.

It is perhaps worth noting that owing to pressure of space, time, and money in large families children often spent a good deal of formative time with relatives, particularly childless ones, as in the case of Norah and her aunt, and it was not uncommon for children to actually go to live with such relatives, as Lucy's sister had done.

## Parents

### Fathers

Two women, in the three generations under review, grew up without fathers, both of them in the second generation. Cissie I's father was killed when she was only four and Janie's father was unaccounted for. Out of the other sixteen fathers half of them worked in iron foundries and four of them were miners, reflecting the traditional heavy industries of the area.

Most families in Falkirk and district were connected in some way with the iron industry, if not through fathers then through brothers or uncles or cousins. The work in the foundries was mainly skilled work and, in fact, all the fathers of women in the

group who worked in foundries had jobs as skilled operatives. The work was hard but the money was comparatively good, at least for some of the time. Apprenticeships were fairly short compared to other trades and young, healthy men could earn a reasonable living for an arduous job. Of course, the disadvantage of this manual occupation was that earnings trailed off with age, as they did in mining, so that peak earning power was very much concentrated at the beginning of a man's working life.

In the first generation the fathers of four of the women - Mary, Connie, Nellie and Maisie - worked in foundries. Edith's father was a miner, Grace's a carriage driver, and Amy's father, being from a slightly different area, worked in a sugar house. Two of the fathers of women in the second generation worked in foundries, those of Norah and Lucy; Bella's had worked in the coal depot; and Kate's, although once again from a different area, had been a miner. In the third generation the fathers of Alice and Kate II worked in foundries, those of Joan and Liz were miners, while Cissie II's father was a fruit hawker cum small shopkeeper.

As children, all the women had a very detailed knowledge of what their fathers' jobs entailed, particularly Maisie in the first generation and Lucy in the second, who frequently went into the foundries to take food to their fathers. It is often suggested in the literature that male and female children's knowledge of the work their fathers do is scant in the extreme but this was definitely not supported by my data which proved the



opposite to be the case.

## Mothers

Besides not having their fathers around when they were children, Cissie and Janie were both young when they lost their mothers. Of the other sixteen mothers only four never worked in paid employment and one of these four was Connie who, as we know ~~Connie~~ only too well by now, had spent her time working in her mother's house to enable her mother to continue in her job as a midwife.

The point must be made here that if asked about their mothers working many of my respondents claimed that their mothers "never worked" when, in fact, it was clear, later in the interview, that they had. I have made some reference to this when I pointed out in the ethnography that Joan had made the statement that her mother only worked "when necessary" which had turned out to be many years of continuous employment. This same syndrome of denial was to recur when the women started talking about their own lives as working wives and mothers. It transpired that if women worked part-time, if they worked as part of the informal economy, or if they moved in and out of the formal labour force then these activities were not classed as "work" or "real work". "Work" was only what men did, that is, a definite career or job which was continuous throughout the life

course.

It was mothers of women in the first generation who were most likely not to have worked. They were the mothers of Maisie, Edith, and Mary, who all had large families - twelve, ten and nine children respectively. However, Amy's mother, who had a family of ten sewed in the house, and Grace's mother was forced into doing the same after the premature death of her husband. The other two mothers worked outside the home in the formal economy - Connie's mother was a midwife, mainly because her husband was a drunkard, and Nellie's mother, who had a much smaller family than her counterparts, worked as a nurse.

In the second generation Lucy's mother, who had eight of a family, did not do paid work of any kind, and Norah's mother was in the situation of working for her grandmother. Cissie I's mother had worked in a shop before she died, and Kate I's mother worked as a part-time cleaner.

In the third generation all the women had mothers who worked at some time. If they did not work at any other time in their lives they worked during the Second World War. At this juncture the mothers of Alice, Joan and Liz worked in munitions and Kate II's mother worked in the fish shop in Stirling throughout the war years. Cissie II's mother, of course, worked all her working life in the fruit shop. Besides working in the war, Alice's

mother worked for a time in the foundry on night shift, and Joan's mother worked full-time as a cleaner when her husband became too ill to remain the principal breadwinner. Janie's granny, despite her age, had worked in seasonal jobs, such as tattie-picking, in order to keep the grandchildren she had become responsible for.

Women of all three generations had, as children, seen their mothers deal more than adequately with large families, crowded conditions little money and few luxuries at home. They had also, in most cases it turns out, seen them cope as well with having an outside job and all the responsibilities that it entailed. Those whose own mothers had not been involved in paid work were aware of this happening around them in their extended families, in the form of grandmothers or aunties, and in the community since the practice was widespread among their neighbours, who did all manner of jobs from cleaning stairs to full-time skilled work in the foundries or hosieries. It was normal to see strong, independent women who had their hard lives well in order. Lillian Rubin who grew up in an American working-class family writes,

--- I also learned about the remarkable tenacity of the human spirit as I watched my mother's seemingly inexhaustible strength and her fierce determination to hold her small family together against devastating odds. Just by her way of being she taught me that women are not weak and incapable, that strength, daring and risk is not "only for men". (Rubin 1976: xi)

Besides working women being a commonplace in the family and the community it was also apparent, perhaps more surprisingly, that fathers frequently worked a good deal in the house. Everyone mentioned something that their fathers did towards housework and helping with the children but the fathers of Norah and Kate I in the second generation and those of Joan, Liz, Alice and Kate in the third generation did an amazing amount. As we know Joan's mother and father did a complete role reversal owing to his ill health and inability to continue in employment. Help from fathers was necessary and unavoidable since families were so large, women were often paid workers and illness was so prevalent. However, although shared household tasks and responsibilities would seem to have been very widespread it is interesting to note that the men went to great lengths to try to hide their domestic tasks from the community at large and sometimes even from their children. Bella mentioned that her father only did the housework behind a locked door, Kate I's father drew the line at hanging out the washing and Norah's father sent all the children off to their gran's or somewhere before he got stuck into the housework.

### **Mother's Little Helpers**

Help from men was crucial but help from children, particularly the older daughters of the family, was even more crucial. Just how much mothers relied on their daughters being capable from a very young age is quite clear in the example of Connie and her mother, and Kate II and her mother because it



would have been impossible for the mothers to work as they did without unceasing help from their daughters.

In the first generation Edith, Connie, Nellie and Maisie were eldest daughters and what's more Edith, Connie and Maisie were the eldest daughters of very large families and talked a great deal of helping their mothers inside and outside the home. Grace, Connie and Maisie all worked in outside employment while they were still at school. Grace sold fish after school and Maisie did a milk round before school started, while Connie helped her mother in midwifery whenever necessary. Grace helped despite being the third eldest daughter because her father had died. Mary and Amy were youngest daughters and it was clear that because of their position in the family they did not take on anything like the work-load or responsibility of older girls, although they regularly did odd jobs. However, when parents became old and infirm younger daughters could well become responsible for them, often for a long time, as was very apparent in Mary's case.

Women in the second generation had also helped their families from being quite young, particularly since two of this group were eldest daughters - Norah and Cissie I (effectively); two were only daughters - Bella and Janie; and two were second eldest daughters in very large families - Kate I and Lucy. Norah and Lucy also helped their aunties as well as their mothers.

In the third generation women had worked as children just as much, if not more, than their counterparts in the preceding generations. Liz's mother was in general poor health and her father worked shifts, Joan's father was ill and her mother worked full-time, and Cissie II's mother and father worked very long hours in the fruit business. These three women in particular worked very hard. Liz and Kate II helped their granny's as well as their mothers.

So, as we have seen girls were frequently making significant contributions to the household, in terms of income and organisation, from about the age of seven or eight. Childhood time was in this sense severely contracted.

### School

Owing to the above circumstances family time and 'outside time' seem to have been less differentiated than they are believed to be now and it is abundantly clear that family time was the more crucial and the more important. Young girls had lots of time off school to help at births and confinements, to help at times of illness, or simply to work for pay.

School, when women in the first three generations attended, was only at the elementary level, up to the age of fourteen, and even then, as we have seen, exemptions were often granted when family circumstances demanded it. Hardly anybody mentioned school

in the first generation unless it was in the negative sense of not being there which is how Grace, Edith and Maisie referred to it. Maisie talked of being embarrassed at having to take time off school to attend to family responsibilities but most accepted the prevailing situation as being an unavoidable fact of life. By the time we reach the second generation, however, Bella, Kate I and Lucy, while accepting and understanding that they had to leave school in their early teens, expressed disappointment at this requirement perhaps because by this time bursaries had been introduced so that it was possible in theory to carry on with one's education. Both Bella and Kate did pass the bursary and win a secondary school place. However, although the education itself was free parents could not afford to lose a wage-earner or buy the necessary uniforms and books. By the third generation home still took precedence over school with the classic example being Cissie II who managed to put home before school even when she was at school, by taking in the week's washing.

#### **Fourth Generation**

It is amazing how little childhood time has changed when we get to the group of women who grew up mainly in the 1960s. Big differences were apparent in the size of families and most noticeably in the houses where childhood had been spent. All the women in this generation had spent most of their time as children in houses or flats that were much larger and better equipped than the accommodation where their mothers or grandmothers had grown

up. However, other factors, such as little money, illness and death were still there to be reckoned with and to set their stamp on life. Family time still took precedence over school or leisure.

### **Immediate Families**

No-one in this group grew up in a family of origin which ran into double figures but Wendy and Michelle were part of families with five children, and Carol and Cissie of families with four children. Certainly in Michelle's case this was because her parents were Catholics and didn't believe in artificial methods of birth control but religious factors cannot account for the large number of children in any other family. Kate only had one sibling but this can be partly accounted for by the fact that her father was killed and her mother did not remarry until much later in life. Donna was an only child in the sense that her 'sister' was a step-sister. Her's was the only family in the sample cited to have been disrupted by divorce. Sue was an only child.

Of those who spent their childhoods in large families, Michelle and Cissie III were eldest children and, what's more, eldest daughters, and Wendy and Carol were second eldest children and second eldest daughters. Kate III and Sue were only daughters and so, effectively, was Donna since there was a large age gap between her and her step-sister. Position in the family and a person's sex, together with the ratio of sexes in the family, was still important and all these young women had as



girls worked in the house to a considerable extent. Wendy Drake worked as much and was depended upon as much as any daughter in previous generations. Besides helping her mother a fantastic amount she also helped her granny a good deal. It was noticeable that by the time we reach this generation there was little mention of fathers working in the house to any great extent. In fact, fathers and brothers were typically branded as "lazy".

### Fathers

During their childhood no-one's father had worked in the foundries or the mines, an observation which fits with the general fact that these industries were declining and newer ones were taking their place. Two of the more recent industries to bring employment to the area had been chemicals and oil. Both Michelle and Sue's fathers worked for British Petroleum at Grangemouth, and Donna's step-father worked in the oil industry, on the rigs. Cissie III's father worked in a sweet factory, and Wendy's father moved in and out of employment owing to his poor health. No-one in this youngest generation seemed to have much idea at all about what their father's jobs entailed and had never seen them in their working environment.

Illness and death, especially as related to men, were still prominent features in the families of this fourth generation. As we have just said Wendy's father was constantly ill but Carol and Kate III both had fathers who died, with Kate III experiencing

the death of her own father and her step-father before she reached the age of seventeen. Donna had lost her father as a result of divorce. She was the only person in the sample cited here to have faced family disruption for this reason. Only one other person in the larger sample had experienced this and in this case it had happened when the daughter of the divorcing parents was in her late twenties.

### Mothers

Only Carol's and Michelle's mothers had not worked while married with children. In the case of Michelle's mother, Joan, this was possibly because of the fact that her earlier illness had left her with only one lung which meant she should not do anything too strenuous, such as bring up a large family and work outside the home and in the case of Carol's mother, Alice, it was mainly due to the fact that she had her children very close together and simply could not have coped with outside work for a good many years.

Everyone else in this group had experience of their mothers working and had no hesitation talking about it although there was definitely a residual feeling that married women should not have to work, that it wasn't quite right in some way. This was particularly clear in Donna's case when she proudly pointed out that neither her mother nor her aunties had had to go out to work for very long periods, and certainly not when they had a husband, except for her Aunt Judy who was a special case because her

daughter was a diabetic child with special needs that had to be paid for. Donna's mother had worked at the stage in her life when her first husband, Donna's dad, had left her but finished immediately she started living with the man who was to become her second husband. The mothers of the other three girls had worked in full-time employment for most of the time their children were growing up. Sue's mother had always worked full-time in a clothing factory; at the beginning of Wendy's childhood her mother had worked in seasonal jobs but had gone on to work full-time in the brickworks; and Kate III's mother had worked part-time until her father died but since that time had always worked full-time. For the mothers of Sue and Kate combining home life and work life was made easier by the fact that their families were small but it is clear that without the continued help and support of Wendy, Liz would have been quite unable to work as she did for so many years while her family were growing up and her husband was ill.

### School

Despite the fact for all the group the school leaving age had been raised by two years, in practice this fact made little difference to the lives of these girls. The extra years at school were empty years as far as pupils and staff at the schools involved were concerned. It is evident that in all cases teachers only paid attention to those pupils being entered for exams and for the most part other pupils need not have been at

school and frequently weren't. No-one in this generation spoke of liking their secondary education and all had played truant from the age of fourteen, if not before. (Humphries 1981). Wendy was hardly ever at school owing to her various illnesses but she seemed to be well enough to do what she enjoyed best which was keeping home for her mother. Wendy left school early to concentrate on this aspect of her life so once again we see family time taking precedence over school time. Michelle also left school early and helped her mother in the house until she decided to look for a job some months later.

### **Starting Work and Adolescence**

### **Three Generations Together**

All the women in the first three generations had left school by the time they were fourteen and all were certainly in full-time work at the age of fourteen. Those who left school earlier worked in the house until they were fourteen and then entered the labour market, and those who left school actually at fourteen went to work immediately, with the majority of respondents saying that they had left school on Friday and started work the following Monday.

The main points to be noted about formal employment in these generations are, first of all, everyone talked of liking their job and taking a pride in it, despite the fact that most of the work entailed working very long hours for very poor pay. Women



liked their jobs because they actually found the work intrinsically interesting; they liked getting away from home for a while into a situation that was in a lot of ways more relaxed and where relationships and their expectations were clearly structured; their employment was no harder than work they had done for years at home; and they liked the company at work - had a laugh. Secondly, whether their pay was a little or a lot, and whether they lived at home or not all the women gave their wages to their mothers and received a small amount of pocket money in return. Like leaving school at fourteen, this practice was simply accepted as the way life was. It was accepted that helping the family in financial terms as well as in kind was the correct and only thing to do. No-one questioned it. It is significant that wages were always given to the mother and never to the father which probably strengthened the bond between a mother and her children and increased her power. As the receiver of household finance mother was recognised as the organiser of family life. It is interesting that this arrangement was paralleled when family allowances were eventually introduced.

In the first generation Grace and Maisie, who were the ones who had been exempted early from school, went into domestic work. Grace worked in service as a cook in a private household, and Maisie worked in service as a maid in the cottage hospital. It was a condition of employment that they lived in. (Roberts). Mary and Connie both worked in a laundry, Edith and Amy worked in mills, outside Falkirk, and Nellie worked as a shop assistant.

During the First World War Nellie and Grace left their respective jobs and went into the foundries to work on munitions.

Two women in the second generation, Janie and Kate I, started their lives as domestics in service although they did not live in, and Kate I soon changed her job to become a shop assistant. Cissie I started her working life as a shop assistant before becoming a cleaner and three of Lucy's five jobs were in shops. Bella worked in a hosiery factory. No-one in the first two generations had gone from school to work in the foundry although Grace and Nellie worked there during the war. However, in the third generation Alice and Cissie II worked in foundries. Alice's work was clerical while Cissie II's was heavy skilled manual work. Joan was the only one in this generation to be a shop assistant, Liz was a bookbinder and Kate II worked first in a bakery and then in a heavy manual job in the brickworks.

All the women were very committed to every job they went into and were amazingly conscientious but they were quite willing and able to swop around to get that bit of extra money. Lucy was the supreme example of this. Between 1938 and 1940 she had a total of five jobs between leaving school and being conscripted. Interestingly she said that she eventually went into the forces to avoid going into factory work. No-one seemed to have much trouble finding work although by the time Lucy's work-life started her testimony suggests that it was generally becoming a little more difficult despite the fact that she was particularly adept at finding work for herself. It is noticeable that most of

the jobs this selection of women did were quite skilled and intricate, and frequently entailed a lot of responsibility, financially as well as otherwise.

Wages were low especially for domestic work and in laundries and shops. Work in mills, foundries, and hosieries was slightly better paid. Munitions work was particularly well paid. Young girls often did odd jobs in their dinner breaks or before and after work. Sometimes they gave this extra money to their mother but sometimes they were allowed to keep it to supplement their pocket money.

Work in the home did not stop once formal employment started. It seems that it was only after girls left their parents' house that they stopped being counted as domestic helpers and even then this was not necessarily the case, as we know from Connie's experience.

Working hours when these first three generations entered the labour market were very long and holidays frequently unpaid. For those women in the first generation the working day usually started at 6 a.m. and was around twelve hours long, frequently even longer. Nellie's hours in the shop were slightly more civilised but even then she started at 8 a.m. and worked a twelve hour day in the week and a marathon fifteen hour day on Saturdays. The shortest working day for this group was that of

Amy, who spent eleven hours in the mill. The shortest working day described by anybody in the first three generations was that of Lucy, in the second when she worked in the dispatch at the bakery from 7.30 to 3.30. Shop hours appeared to be from about 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. but for those in service the length of the working day changed little over the years so that Janie, in the second generation, still worked for thirteen hours.

If childhood time was curtailed, teenage time outside work was virtually non-existent. Girls were in many ways 'grown-up' by their early teens. (McCrindle, J. & Rowbotham, S. 1977) Although Nellie's thoughts in the comment here were obviously magnified by the arrival of the First World War the essence of this quote was repeated many times.

I'll tell y' what, y' sort of grew up quick during the war. Sometimes I think t' m'sel', "I can't remember being all that young". Y' had t' sort o' grow up even though y' were young because, I suppose, of the bombing 'n' all that. Y' sort o' never had much of a teenager's life because y' had either t' go in the forces or work in munitions factories or something like that. I think it made y' more grown up. Y' know, I think t' m'sel' sometimes, these girls, y' know, f' all their dressing up and doing all that, 'n' they think they're so old, but they're so young in their ways.

Cissie Bell made an even more extreme comment. When I asked if she was married while still a teenager she responded, "No, I was never a teenager".

Many factors were at work to suppress or make impossible that 'carefree', personal sense of time which has been attached



to youth since the fifties and sixties. It was during the teenage years of their lives that women felt individual life to be most severely curtailed but it was also, paradoxically, their apprenticeship for learning, from close practical contact with their mothers and from adhering to their mother's temporal rules, what 'time' was to mean to them throughout life. They would later use the same rules to 'control' their own families.

Time in the teenage years was extremely controlled for several reasons, some which were a result of factors outside the family and some a result of factors inside the family. For one thing, as we have seen, young women simply worked very, very long hours so that work time constituted the main parameters of life. Although in Falkirk I never heard the phrase, common in the north of England "all bed and work", this neatly sums up the situation. When girls were not out at work they were frequently working in the house.

Any time outside this was strictly controlled by parents, particularly mothers, up until the girls got married. As we have seen a good many of my respondents were eldest daughters which meant it was their 'responsibility' to 'break the ice' for the children following, especially the other girls. This controlling of time by mothers was a parallel situation to controlling wages until marriage but whereas the latter was freely given, time was not. Girls had very definite times to be home by, normally nine or ten o' clock, and mothers also had to know exactly where they

were going and who with. Remarks along the lines of the one made by Amy Aitken were made by every respondent,

Y' had t' be in at ten on a Saturday 'n' nine on a Sunday. If I wasna in m' mother used t' come t' the top o' the stairs 'n' shout "Time y' were up the stair".

This frequently led even the most virtuous to tell lies. Nellie Allan, a 'model' daughter in every other respect related the following amusing tale,

I was supposed t' be at the night school but the dancing was just across in the Oddfellow's Hall so we used t' sign our name at the night school 'n' go t' the dancing. Then y' had t' make up a story about what y'd been doing at night school. M' father wondered why I never came on at shorthand! Things y' had t' do!

Going out and coming home was analogous to the worker/boss situation typified by clocking-in and out times. If these strict and 'acknowledged' time boundaries were abused, the main punishment accruing, and the most effective, was to deprive the offenders of the very thing they had so casually ignored, their own time. Teenagers were kept in the house in the evenings for a matter of days or weeks.

Dancing, going to the pictures and skating were the main sources of entertainment for teenagers from the beginning of the century to the fifties and all the women in the first three generations mentioned these activities as being the mainstay of

their social lives. A few, like Norah, carried on going to church and counted this among their weekly social occasions but by this stage in life attendance at religious institutions was rare for most of the women interviewed. It was at the dancing or the pictures that women often met the men who were to become their husbands. If not there then they frequently met them where they worked or via friends and relatives. Most of these men and women had known each other all their lives, usually having grown up in the same locality, even the same street.

As teenagers all the women making up the first three generations were totally ignorant of the facts of life, even menstruation. Nellie Allan remarked,

We didn't know about periods, it was all hush-hush. In our days if y' were out with a boyfriend 'n' y' wanted t' go t' the toilet y' wouldn't y' were too shy. Looking back it was a piece of nonsense. It was a false modesty when all said 'n' done. Everyone has t' do it, it's just a bodily function.

No reference was made to any kind of bodily function either at home, even between sisters, or at school. It has been suggested in the literature that women became more aware of such matters when they started work but my data suggest that most remained ignorant of the details of sex, pregnancy and childbirth right up until the birth of their first baby. (Roberts 1984, Harevan and Langenbach 19 , pp 243-244) Liz Chalmers said that "y' just had to find things out f' y'self" while Lucy pointed out that "y' didn't ask y' parents sex questions or anything" and Maisie Agnew

observed,

For all the carrying on with a big family y' didna know as much as they do now. I was married before I knew anything. I didn't know about menstruation, even from school. Anything like that was all hush-hush. Y' didn't talk about it among yourselves. We didn't know what periods meant.

#### Fourth Generation

As we have already noted Wendy and Michelle left school early and helped their mothers with the house and family. Wendy was virtually totally responsible for the house while her mother worked full-time at the brickworks and she never had a job herself until she was twenty, after she was married. She was in a very similar situation to the one Connie Armstrong had been in all those years earlier.

When Michelle started work she went into a clothing factory and it was here that Sue and Kate III also found employment. Cissie III also worked mainly in a factory, a sweet factory, although she started off her working life as a waitress. It was common in all types of factories to find women working alongside one or more of their relatives. When Carol left school she started work as a clerical assistant in a foundry, which is what her mother had done, before moving on to become a shop assistant and then a sport's attendant. Only Donna had no connection with factories or shops for she began a career as a hairdresser. Despite improved working conditions, shorter hours and better wages no-one in this youngest group spoke of liking their job.



Although without exception they preferred work to school, they disliked it on the whole, mainly because of boredom and occasionally because of officious supervisors.

Work had few other connotations for these young women than filling-in time before they got married, whereupon they generally left their jobs, primarily because they had a child very quickly. Donna Dunn deliberately got pregnant to escape from her awful job. Work time did not have the same importance as it had for women in previous generations. The family was not so dependent upon the wages of its offspring and for these girls outside socialising was far more important at this stage in their lives than either family or work. They had a selfish and instrumental attitude to work which had not been particularly evident among the other groups of women.

No-one in this fourth generation, even if the first child in the family to start work, gave their wages to their mothers. Instead they paid 'board' which usually was not very much and was an unrealistic amount for the 'services' they received while at home. Some girls did not pay any board whatsoever. So, this particular situation had been reversed from its previous standing. Parents now tended to subsidise children rather than the other way round. (Barker 1972).

For several years during adolescence their attitude to home

and family was similar to their attitude to their jobs. The social activities which by this time had become the centre of adolescent life revolved around dancing, in the form of discos, youth clubs, parties and pubs, or simply the street for those without access to such amenities. Although similar in some ways to earlier entertainments these were different because they were available for consumption all week not just at weekends and frequently involved access to alcohol. It was common for girls to go slightly further afield for their entertainment than their mothers or grandmothers had done, owing to ease of transport, which meant they met men from outwith the immediate locality. Times for being home were still strictly controlled but 'excuses' for being late were more readily accepted and matters were helped by the fact that most of these girls could phone up their parents if they were delayed in any way. As long as mothers knew what was happening they appeared to be quite reasonable with regard to times for being home.

Every female in this generation was aware of the facts of life but this was due entirely to teaching practise in schools. At home the situation had changed little. Bodily functions, periods, sex, contraception and pregnancy were all topics which were avoided certainly until after the birth of a woman's first child. The majority of women in the first three generations when talking about these matters had lamented the fact that these topics had not been open for discussion in their families and usually said that they had been different with their own daughters. However, despite what they believed, or wanted to

believe, this was patently not the case. It was evident from the daughters and granddaughters of these older women that little had changed.

### Courting

In the majority of cases, women in the first three generations only had one boyfriend and he was therefore the man they went on to marry. Couples tended to have known each other "all their days", having been brought up within a few streets or houses of each other. Romantic involvement usually started after an initial meeting at work, at the dancing or at the pictures. In cases where men and women did not know each other very well, often they were well-known by another member of the family, and this was frequently how women met their mates. The boyfriends, and later husbands, of Connie and Maisie had been friends of their brothers and Cissie I's man was a friend of the uncle she stayed with. Nellie was the only girl among those in the first two generations who had not known her husband before they started courting but she was introduced to him by friends, so he was "known" in a sense.

Males who were unknown locally and unknown by the family, especially the women of the family, were bad news. If a man could not be placed in terms of his family history this was quite serious and continued involvement with such a person was frowned upon. This happened in the case of Alice although the initial



suspicion of "unknown" male was compounded by the fact that he had been married before. Lucy also married a man who was outwith the community she was part of, and, although her parents do not seem to have raised serious objections to the marriage, it is interesting to note that it was something of a disastrous relationship. If Stan had been from Falkirk his gambling habits may well have been discovered before it was too late. In most cases women took their prospective mates home to meet their parents and gain their approval or disapproval.

It did not seem to be the case that marriage was highly synchronised with the family of origin, in the sense that it was delayed in any way (except perhaps in Edith's case), the sense given in a lot of the literature. What was very clear was that most daughters remained living close to their families of origin, and that boundaries between their own and their mother's families and homes were pretty much non-existent. Connie continued to care for her mother's family, as well as her own, while her mother worked, and Edith lived with her parents all her married life. In their later lives, Grace and Nellie looked after their aging mothers. Grace took her mother meals and did her odd jobs, and Nellie nursed her mother while managing to maintain a separate household in the flat next door.

It would seem that reasons for marrying were stronger than reasons for not marrying. Certainly in two cases, those of Grace and Connie, the women were pregnant and I suspect that more were



but did not say. Unfortunately, I didn't interview the daughters of many of this oldest generation to verify this. I found out about Grace and Connie being pregnant when they got married by their eldest daughters giving me their date of birth which I could then compare with their parents date of marriage. It should also be remembered that, at least for Edith in the first generation, the First World War had seriously disrupted marriage plans and normal courtship sequences. This sort of thing was also evident in the third generation where National Service disrupted patterns and plans.

#### **Fourth Generation**

Not as much had changed with regard to courtship patterns as might be expected when we reach those in the fourth generation. In the main, mates were still drawn from a local area although the extent of this had widened by a few miles. Once more, women still had few boyfriends and often ended up marrying the first or second one they had. Courtships were very short among those girls cited here. Girls spoke more readily about having sex before marriage although not all of them had a sexual relationship before they were married. Everyone, except Sue, who did have intercourse, did so with only one man who was to later become their husband. Carol and Sue had lived with their prospective husbands before marriage but this was uncommon and not as positively a held state of affairs as might have been expected. It was still very much the exception and most of these women, who came of age in the seventies had great difficulty in

imagining they could have realistically behaved in such a way.

## **Marriage**

### **Three Generations Together**

Reflecting what we know from statistical data about the beginning of this century, even the small group of women in the first generation displayed a wide age range at marriage. Grace and Connie were the youngest married, at eighteen, while Edith was the oldest at twenty-eight. In between, Mary was twenty-six when she got married, Amy twenty-one, and Nellie and Maisie were twenty. All the women married men the same age or considerably older, except Grace who married a man six years younger than herself. Grace and Connie who were the youngest married were also the ones that had been pregnant on their wedding days. In the second generation group four of the women - Cissie I, Norah, Janie and Kate I - were married in their teens and all four were pregnant at the time. Bella, the remaining woman of this generation, was not married until she was twenty-five. No-one in this generation married a man younger than themselves. Their partners were the same age or older, Cissie I's husband was five years older and Janie's eight years older. By the time we reach the third generation age at marriage appears to have become more

regulated, most women in the group were married around the age of twenty. Liz was the youngest at eighteen and Joan the oldest at twenty-two. Once again we find it to be the case that the women in this group married men about the same age as themselves or older, Alice and Liz both married men five years older.

### The Big Day

All the women mentioned their wedding day but no-one spoke of it in much detail because there wasn't a lot to tell. It seems that up until recently marriage in the working-class has been a very low key affair. By far the most common place of marriage throughout the first three generations was the manse, the minister's house usually attached to the church. Eleven out of the seventeen women making up the group were married there, and of the other six, two never specified where their marriage ceremony took place and two who said that they were married in church probably meant in the manse at the church. I say this because this interchanging of the words 'church' and 'manse' did occur in other later interviews when it seems that women assumed I'd know what they actually meant because of the historical period they were talking about. I quickly realised that I had to ask them to be more specific and make the distinction clear. Cissie I was married in the register office owing to the circumstances surrounding her marriage, and Joan in the Catholic church owing to very strong religious beliefs.

It has been suggested to me that the manse, besides being



the minister's house, was also something of a half-way house between a religious and a secular marriage and that the 'custom' of being married here was as much normative as financial. It does seem to be the case that if women were pregnant or were marrying a divorced man they would not have a full church service. However, the women themselves spoke of a manse wedding in religious and financial terms. They definitely thought of themselves as being married in the eyes of God, something they positively valued, and everyone echoed these words,

Most folk were married in the manse. Working folk  
didna have the money t' have a church wedding.

There was absolutely no point in couples being married in church if they couldn't afford all the trimmings that such a ceremony implied. Besides needing more elaborate clothes for a church wedding there would also be the choir, the bells, and the flowers to pay for. Also the whole point would be to make a show in front of guests. Working-class people could not afford to be guests at weddings. They couldn't afford either the necessary outfit or the necessary gift. And anyway, if people were invited to attend the ceremony they would expect to be invited to a reception afterwards. In the manse it was always just the bride and groom, plus the best man and the best maid who attended, similar to witnesses at the register office. Parents and family were not present, not even the bride's mother. Dress was simple, the bride usually wore a dark suit which could be kept for 'best' for many years afterwards. This small ceremony was followed



usually by tea for the immediate family at the bride's mother's. Amy and Jack had their wedding tea at his mother's which was unusual and Janie had a reception in the village hall which was very unusual. No reasons were given to explain why these two cases differed from the norm. Only Janie mentioned having a wedding cake and no-one mentioned having a honeymoon of any description.

#### Fourth Generation

Five of the seven women in this generation had been married in their teens and the other two were married at the age of twenty. Sue Day was the youngest bride at sixteen and Carole Dillon the oldest, by a few months, at twenty. The men which these women married still tended to be older but not by quite as much as in previous generations, with the age gap being only a couple of years. All but two of the girls had been pregnant on their wedding day.

Quite surprisingly, in view of books such as Diana Leonard's 'Sex and Generation', these young women did not say very much about their wedding days. By this time marriage in the manse had certainly died a death. Michelle and Donna were married in Church but the rest of the ceremonies took place in the register office. Michelle was married in church for religious reasons and Donna married there more or less to please her mother. It is interesting to note that although these two girls married in

church they did not wear white, owing to the fact that they were pregnant. Wendy was married at the register office because her husband wasn't keen on a church service but pregnancy seemed to be the main reason why the other girls were married there. They somehow didn't think it quite correct to be married in church if they were pregnant. Donna lamented the fact that she was one of the first in her age group to be pregnant on marriage precisely because after she had been to the register office other girls who were pregnant had obviously had a church service without much community censure. At least for the young women I tapped in my interviews marriage was still a fairly low-key affair but this obviously had a good deal to do with the fact that they were young and pregnant so that a large showy wedding was somehow in appropriate.

Those girls who were pregnant stressed, as their mothers had done, that there was no overt family or community pressure on them to marry simply because of their condition and in Michelle's case even the priest warned her about marrying purely for this reason. Thus, it does seem to be the case that attitudes about such matters were becoming more relaxed and were less liable to be a source of total embarrassment. None of the women hesitated to tell me about their prenuptial conceptions whereas no-one in previous generations had told me outright if they'd been pregnant on marriage.

### **'Married Quarters'**

### Three Generations Together

Accommodation after marriage was an enduring problem. The most common pattern for couples to follow was a period of living with relatives before moving to a room and kitchen. Surprisingly in the first generation this pattern only applied to four of the seven women. Three women in this age group had what might loosely be described as 'houses' to move into after marriage. Grace's first house was condemned when a wall fell down, Edith's first 'house' was a single end, meaning a dwelling of one room, and Connie's first house was a rented room and kitchen. Mary and Amy, being youngest daughters, lived with their mothers after marriage and Nellie and Maisie both lived in rooms for several months. All the women spent the majority of their married lives in a room and kitchen, the same type of accommodation they had grown up in and the type that has already been described earlier.

The majority of women in the second generation lived with relatives following their marriage, apart from Cissie I who lived behind the fruit shop and Lucy who stayed in a room of the flat where Stan had lodged before they were married. Bella lived with her mother for seven years and had two children while she was there; Norah lived with her husband's mother for three years and left just before the birth of her second child; Janie lived with her granny for two years during which time she had a child; and Kate I lived in a room of Wilf's brother's house for nine months. Eventually everyone moved on to stay in a room and kitchen.



Those women making up the third generation also found housing a problem after their marriages, and again the solution was to begin married life with relatives. Liz stayed with her husband's mother before buying a room and kitchen; Kate II stayed with her mother to begin with and then also bought a room and kitchen; and Kate II lived with her mother for a short time to begin with. Alice differed from this pattern in that she began life not with relatives but in a room of someone else's house before moving to a flat which was three flights up and consisted of just two rooms a small kitchen and outside toilet - hardly ideal accommodation in which to bring up three small children which is what she had to do. Housing in the fifties which is when these women began their married lives was still very poor and substandard. Everyone's house still had an outside toilet and the room and kitchen which Liz and Fred bought had no running water and no electric light. It was in fact condemned a few years later. All the women were well into their married and childbearing lives before they moved into better accommodation, in all cases rented from the council.

#### Fourth Generation

Even by the time we reach the fourth generation of women who were married in the seventies the pattern of starting married life with relatives was still a very common pattern. Only Sue in this group began her career as a wife in any other way. All the other women and their husband's had started off their married lives with the woman's family of origin. The young couples had



been in no position financially to buy property and had not acquired enough points in the housing system to qualify immediately for council property.

They didn't live with relatives for as long as their mothers or grandmothers had but this kind of start to their married lives was still critical and necessary. It gave them all a good start in life, particularly in financial terms. They soon moved on to council property, usually flats, which bore little resemblance to the dire housing in which their predecessors had been forced to live for so many years. The homes of these young women were large, bright, warm, frequently centrally heated, and self-contained. No-one had to share any amenity, be it a washhouse or a toilet. Care was taken with furnishings and decoration much of which had often been provided by parents. It was the norm for parents to make these provisions upon the marriage of their children even if they were widowed or still had large families at home. It had not been possible for parents of earlier generations to make such a gesture because family finances had until very recently been too tight to allow this. However, certainly by the seventies the practice was well-established so that hardly anyone started off their married lives being materially deprived.

### **Marriage and motherhood**

### **Three Generations Together**

Although it is evident that the majority of women in the first three generations had smaller families than their mothers the majority still had large families, mainly it would seem because of their ignorance of, or unwillingness to use, birth control. Several miscarriages were reported and infant mortality was still reasonably high. The vast majority of babies were born at home, under the supervision of a midwife and sometimes a doctor. Often female relatives were also present but husbands and children were never there. Giving birth, especially for the first time, was frequently a frightening experience because women had little knowledge of what it involved. It was a rite de passage which was clothed in secrecy.

The other striking fact to emerge was just how long the childbearing years of these women lasted. They often stretched from the teens to the late thirties/early forties. Among those who had more than a couple of children, childbearing was spread over eighteen years in Connie's case, seventeen in Grace's, fourteen in Amy's and eleven in Edith's. This frequently led to a blurring of generations in the extended family because by the time a woman's last child was born her first child could quite easily be a parent, as we saw in the case of Connie, Norah and Bella.

Connie had the largest family in the first generation, giving birth to eight children from when she was eighteen until she was thirty-six. One of her children died as a baby. All

were delivered at home by her mother, who was, as we know, a midwife. Edith Archer had the next largest family in this generation. Between the ages of twenty-nine and forty she gave birth to six children. The first five were born at home and the last one in hospital. They all survived to adulthood. Amy Aitken had a slightly smaller family of five. The first was born when she was twenty-one and the last when she was thirty-seven. All of them were born in the house. Two died as children from whooping cough. Grace Anderson had six pregnancies and five children between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five but one pregnancy ended in a miscarriage and the twins she bore died shortly after birth. Mary, Maisie, and Nellie had much smaller families. Mary and Maisie had two children each, and Nellie had just one son. In their cases it seems that they must have used some kind of family planning to limit their offspring. This was necessary in Mary's case owing to lack of space at her mother's, and in Nellie's case because of severe financial difficulties. Although implying that she was quite innocent of such matters, Nellie probably did have some idea about contraception from her mother being a nurse. In this respect it is quite strange that Connie and Grace had large families, which they said had been by accident rather than by design, since they were involved in midwifery.

Cissie Bell had the largest family in the second generation and the largest family in the entire group interviewed. From her teens to her early forties she gave birth to fourteen children,



three died as babies and one died at the age of four from meningitis. Her first child was born in the hospital but the following thirteen were all born in the house at the back of the shop. Janie Black had six children over a period of eleven years, from when she was twenty to when she was thirty-one, all of them being born at home. One child died at the age of nine months from silent pneumonia. Bella Bolton's first child, which she had when she was twenty-seven, died at birth but her four subsequent children survived. Her last child was born when she was thirty-seven. Bella was the only woman out of these first three generations to give birth to all her children in hospital. Lucy Bremner had the last two of her four children in the hospital and the first two at home. Her childbearing was spread over eight years, from the age of twenty-six to thirty-four. Kate I had the smallest family in this generation, largely due to the fact that her husband was away for the duration of the Second World War but also partly because she underwent a hysterectomy in her thirties. She had two children, the first at the age of eighteen and the second at the age of twenty-two.

The women in the third generation still had relatively large families although the years of childbearing did not last quite so long. Liz Chalmers' family of six, born in the space of nine years between the the age of eighteen and twenty-seven, was the largest. As we know Liz was unable to take the pill which was available by this time for reasons connected with her health and the attitude of her doctor. Her first two babies were born in hospital but the last three were born in the house. Liz's



husband, Fred, was present at the birth of their last child which was unfortunately still-born, and this was the only occurrence, in the first three generations, of a husband witnessing the birth of his child.

Alice and Joan had the next largest families, with five children each. Joan had her five offspring between the time when she was twenty-two and thirty-three. Three babies were born at home and two in hospital. All the births were quite straightforward. Alice was married two years before the birth of her first child but then had three within three years. Her first child was born when she was twenty-three and her last when she was twenty-nine. Three were born at home and two in hospital, once more with no complications. Alice said that for her giving birth was "like shelling peas".

Cissie Campbell had just one less child than Alice and Joan. Her first child was born when she was twenty-one and her last when she was thirty, although her first three were born within four years of each other. These three were born in hospital but the last one was born at home.

Kate II's family of a boy and a girl was the smallest one in this group. Mark was born when she was twenty-two and Kate III when she was twenty-five, both in hospital. Kate II planned to have two children but may well have had more if her husband had not been killed. By the time she remarried she was well past childbearing age.

## Fourth Generation

Obviously the women of the fourth generation were only just beginning their families when I spoke to them, all of them having only one child and it is impossible to predict exactly what their completed families would look like. However, from what they said it would appear that most couples planned on having two children, that is, generally much smaller families than their mothers, grandmothers or great grandmothers. It is ironic that although everyone believed in, and used, family planning, including Michelle who was a Catholic, to limit their families to a desired size two-thirds of the group had been pregnant on their wedding day. Largely contraception was only practised after marriage it seems, for even Sue who was not pregnant when she got married had for many years taken 'risks'. Only Wendy Drake had taken precautions but this had been in the sense of abstaining from intercourse until after marriage. She was unusual in this respect but it must be said that as in previous generations everyone, except for Sue, had intercourse with only one man, the man whom they eventually married. It might be suggested that the reason they married the men they did was because they were pregnant but from their own and their mothers reports of the situation this does not seem to be true. It was usually clear that they would not be forced by their families, or more generally society, to marry simply because they were 'in trouble'. They would be supported by their families whatever

they chose to do in the circumstances.

It was common for women to have their first child while in their teens or early twenties which means that their childbearing period would almost certainly be over by the time they were thirty, if not several years before that. All the women had given birth in hospital and had obviously never seriously considered a home birth as a realistic alternative. Apart from Sue's husband, Steve, who had been drunk at the time, all husbands had been present at the birth of their children. This was something that was actively encouraged by the medical profession by this time. It was the normal pattern.

Interestingly among most couples in the youngest generation it seemed that despite the above involvement husbands were less reluctant to help with childcare and housework than they had been in previous generations. So, although because of things like men being present at birth and pushing prams, it is often claimed that there is a more equal relationship in the sphere of domestic work this may not, in fact, be the case. The ideology 'man's world, woman's place' has always existed in working-class culture but perhaps it is only now, with smaller families and better material conditions, that this can be properly worked out in practice. Previously, whatever their beliefs about 'manliness' husbands had little choice but to help their wives and children.

### **Married Women Workers**



### Three Generations Together

It has already been mentioned twice that women in these generations did not tend to define part-time, casual or informal occupations as 'work' and it usually took some time to get them to talk about such jobs. It was during the two World Wars that married women in the first generation were most likely to have worked full-time. During the First World War Grace worked in munitions and during the Second World War while she went back to the foundry, Edith Archer worked in the mill sewing government stores and Nellie Allan worked as a credit collector worked full-time for the duration of the war. Aside from this women who had part-time jobs did things like cleaning, washing and sewing, usually at the beginning of their married lifes when times in general were very hard. However, it must be remembered that often for reasons connected with the ill-health of husbands women, like Connie, frequently had to go out to work later in their married lives for a considerable length of time.

All of the women in the second generation worked for the duration of the Second World War, and all, except Bella, worked full-time. Outside war time all women in the second generation worked at some point in their married lives. In some of these cases this work was intermittent and part-time but Cissie I worked full-time for her entire working life in the fruit shop, and Lucy Bremner worked almost twenty years as a collector for Household Supplies.



All women in the third generation worked at some stage in their married lives, except for Joan whose health didn't allow it. This was particularly imperative in the case of Kate II whose husband died leaving her with two children to support, and for Liz whose husband suffered permanent ill-health meaning that she was responsible for keeping the entire family afloat.

In all cases, whether women worked full or part-time earnings were crucial despite the fact that in their own terms women did not tend to see their earnings in this way, either saying that they "didn't really work" or else saying they only went to work when they were in need of something in particular, be that a three-piece suit or a new coat.

#### Fourth Generation

In the fourth generation only Wendy Drake and Michelle Drysdale were working at the time of my interview. Both were working part-time in the evenings. The fact that no-one else was in paid employment was, of course, a life course effect, all having very young children. All these other women stated that they wished to take up employment again once their children were old enough to go to nursery or to school. It seemed likely, from what they said, that these women would spend a large part of their lives in employment of some kind after their child-bearing years which looked likely to end by their middle or late twenties.

## Conclusion

There have been huge changes in women's situation over the century in question, primarily because of far superior housing and far smaller families. However, we have also seen how many aspects of life and its course have not altered much between the end of last century and the present day. This is the case because women are still from an early age highly enmeshed with their families and throughout their lives remain responsible for home, children and menfolk. It seems apt to end with a quote from Billy Kaye's play, 'Jute', about working-class life in Dundee earlier this century.

Sarah: An escape, Mammy ... hae ye ever thocht that women hes nae escape, nae choice ... never had because we're thirld wae looking efter oor bairns, oor brithers, oor men ... oor fowk ... meh conscience nae gae beyond them and you're the same wi' me and mine.

Mary: Of course, lassie, couldnae be different.

Sarah: Nae matter how bad it gets ... eh? But when it gets bad eh meh faither and grandfather they'll leave us on our ain ... No for us, mammy, nae choice for us ... we hae tae bide on and on ... tholin' aathing for aabody.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### PRECARIOUSNESS, PREDICTABILITY AND POWER

The way I have chosen to characterise what has been learnt about the essential elements of working-class culture, as a way of pulling the thesis together, is in terms of a paradox. On the one hand, at the collective level, it is a highly predictable life displaying numerous rigid boundaries and controls, while on the other hand, it is a fragile existence which is precarious and ever-threatened at the individual level. The shifting significance of each side of this equation, at the centre of which stands the family, has been observed over the span of the century and the four generations reviewed.

#### Precariousness .

There have always been two principle reasons for the precarious nature of working class<sup>life</sup>. The first one is the insecurity connected with employment in this part of society. Wage earners have frequently suffered from redundancy, short-time working and unemployment. One of the most constraining and hazardous elements of working-class life has always been the economic one which has been described and discussed many times



elsewhere.

However, one of the most striking things running all the way through the interviews were the references to the second principle cause of the insecurity of working-class life. The prevalence of death and illness, around them in their families and in the community, ran through all the generations of women. Illness, both physical and mental, and death, both of which can perhaps be described as the symptoms of poverty have not been discussed enough in the context of working-class life.

There is a great deal of evidence that most people who suffer social disadvantage of various sorts are likely to experience more illness (especially chronic illness) than those in more fortunate circumstances. (Blaxter and Paterson 1982 : 1)

Margery Spring Rice pointed to this aspect of working-class life as far back as 1939 in her survey of the health and conditions of women in working-class communities and Standish Meacham makes a passing reference to the subject in his study of working-class life at the beginning of the century,

The routine was punctuated by illnesses, major and minor. Though men did what they could to stave off illness and therefore unemployment, many lived in a limbo that lay somewhere between sickness and health --- Ailments of one sort or another, their own or their family's, meant that for most housewives nursing was part of the normal routine. Real illness - a debilitating accident at work, cancer or consumption - shattered that routine with upsetting force. (Meacham 1977 : 90 and 91)



The twin scourges of death and illness are the salient features of working-class existence. Poor jobs, unemployment and strikes are possible to live with and to cope with but illness and death and the breaks they cause are not so easily overcome. Illness was without doubt the most frequently mentioned and most extensively covered topic in my interviews, except perhaps in the younger age group, although even there it cropped up because it was part of the fabric of the extended family in which the girls had grown up. Women talked of their own illnesses, those of their children, their parents, their relatives, their friends, their neighbours. Illness, its treatment and consequences played a frequent, frightening and important part of their lives and still lurked threateningly, they could see it all around them. Illness scarred and crippled not only the minds and bodies of the people with the disease or ailment at a particular time but often their entire lives and the entire lives of those around them. We have seen how the health of the father and husband in cases like those of Connie and Joan changed the whole family structure and domestic relations within the household even though they had been stable for many years.

This preoccupation with illness could be written off as female paranoia or hyperchondria but I am certain that it was not simply a matter of a peculiarly gory obsession that focused women's attention on this subject. When I started to gather together the references to illness made by the small group of women who were included in the thesis it began to look like a

veritable catalogue of disaster.

Working conditions were poor and led to illnesses and accidents led to death; nutrition was often poor, child birth hazardous and health facilities non-existent or very poor. Even in 1980 the latter seemed to be particularly significant as in the case of Angela, Kate I's heel and Carole's trouble after the birth of her daughter. Nellie herself and Joan's parents had had to fight to get action on their children's behalf, those with less persistent parents probably died. That women appear to talk more about illness than men is probably due to the fact the socialisation makes this a 'woman's topic' but also because if illness strikes it is the women who are the caring component of the family, who rally round to care for and nurse the sick and dying. It is their lives which are re-arranged by these blows. It is interesting to note that many women recalled a childhood illness as their first memory.

Illness was usually seen as having a reason and it was only premature death that really puzzled them. They didn't see all this illness as anything unusual which is probably not surprising judging from how many illnesses etc. they'd seen in their lives. They only talked about illness usually as an adjunct of something else and rarely for its own sake. It seems highly likely that women only talked about illnesses which had a massive effect on their lives and didn't even bother to mention loads of others that were there but bearable and containable. Blaxter and



Paterson make the important point, which emerged from their own interviews, that women only thought of themselves or others as unhealthy or very ill if they were unable to carry on functioning in their normal roles.

The norms of what constituted good health, now, were conspicuously low. Good health was being able to work, being healthy enough 'for all practical purposes', not being admitted to hospital, having no 'big operations'. One woman who had had TB and continued to suffer <sup>from</sup> bronchitis, still maintained that her health was reasonable because "I'm a'right. I canna grumble - I've aye been able to go about an' that". (Blaxter and Paterson 1982: 28)

Blaxter and Paterson alert us to the fact that the literature on health points to the concept being understood in two ways,

as a more or less static state of being, where to be healthy is to be in good structural and anatomical condition; or as a description of function, where to be healthy is to be able to carry out one's normal roles ... Health, to these women, was ... the absence of the symptoms of illness, or the refusal to admit their existence, the ability to define illnesses as normal, or the determination to carry on despite illness. (1982: 27,30)

In their interviews, and in my interviews, it became obvious that these women drawn from the working-class tended to think of health only in the second sense. Their concept of health was a description of function, of being able to carry on normally. Lucy Bremner made the observation,

M' mother had t' be really ill t' lie down. She felt nothing went on unless she was up and in the centre of it.

Paterson make the important point, which emerged from their own interviews, that women only thought of themselves or others as unhealthy or very ill if they were unable to carry on functioning in their normal roles.

The norms of what constituted good health, now, were conspicuously low. Good health was being able to work, being healthy enough 'for all practical purposes', not being admitted to hospital, having no 'big operations'. One woman who had had TB and continued to suffer <sup>from</sup> bronchitis, still maintained that her health was reasonable because "I'm a'right. I canna grumble - I've aye been able to go about an' that". (Blaxter and Paterson 1982: 28)

Blaxter and Paterson alert us to the fact that the literature on health points to the concept being understood in two ways,

as a more or less static state of being, where to be healthy is to be in good structural and anatomical condition; or as a description of function, where to be healthy is to be able to carry out one's normal roles ... Health, to these women, was ... the absence of the symptoms of illness, or the refusal to admit their existence, the ability to define illnesses as normal, or the determination to carry on despite illness. (1982: 27,30)

In their interviews, and in my interviews, it became obvious that these women drawn from the working-class tended to think of health only in the second sense. Their concept of health was a description of function, of being able to carry on normally. Lucy Bremner made the observation,

M' mother had t' be really ill t' lie down. She felt nothing went on unless she was up and in the centre of it.



Connected with this is the ability to define illness as normal and fit<sup>ting</sup> into the scheme of things. Even Joan Christie commented, "We never had much illness".

I feel there are two other interesting points to be made about illness and its relation to women which were also picked up by Blaxter and Paterson. The first is what they describe as 'illness as a moral category'. They quote Erde who has pointed out that the language surrounding disease and illness is full of words and phrases 'with symbolic meaningfulness, mystery and dread, for example as punitive for or expressive of weakness, sin, evil or immorality' (quoted in Blaxter and Paterson 1982 :32),

A constant theme of our respondents' talk was the conception of illness as a state of spir itual or moral, rather than physical malaise. (Blaxter and Paterson 1982: 33)

The way Alice tried to hide the true state of Eddie's health was indicative of this attitude, as was<sup>the</sup> attitude of Joan's father to his ill-health.

If such a moral view of health is held than it presents a problem in that ill health, especially for earlier generations was actually an inescapable fact of life. Blaxter and Paterson believe that this means that women come to resort to defining illness as being a result of 'bad luck'. They use a rather good

quote from one of their respondents who said,

Things like còulds and a'thing like that I dinna think means anything because a'body gets things like that. It's just big illnesses, they canna be helped, they're there, and they dinna go away...

(1982: 34)

Certainly in my interviews, illness was never related to anything more systematic than this, such as poor living conditions or poor health facilities.

Secondly, as Blaxter and Paterson so rightly recognise, disease and health could to a certain extent co-exist so that, for example, people said that they had good health for a diabetic or such like.

(1981)

Lauer in his book attempts, following Mark Zborowski, to talk about illness in temporal terms and suggests that investigation of this serves to show that the temporal definition given to a situation is not individualistic but depends on the individual's group membership. Zborowski looked at the responses to pain among different national groups and found many differences. It is unnecessary here to go into the details of such a study. However, the point is worth mentioning in this thesis, which has time as its central theme, that any illness in the family necessarily focusses attention on the present and the widespread occurrence of illness and death means that people have a tendency to live for today since no-one knows what tomorrow will hold.

Thus, considerations associated with illness and death together with those connected with unstable economic factors provide all the impetus that is needed to think of the present rather than the future. There can be no confidence that tomorrow will be better than today.

### **Predictability**

#### **The distinctiveness of time in the working-class**

Efforts to control life are partly a result of the combination of factors described above so that indeterminacy is held at bay and life has some structure despite the Fates. Of course, temporal patterns are initially enforced by other circumstances of life in the sphere of the working-class which make orderliness and routine imperative. Bernice Martin writes that 'respectable' working-class people 'live highly structured and ritualised lives, permeated and punctuated by the ordinary daily symbolism of outside/inside and of the role and status demarcations'; where 'control, order and respect for the proper boundaries are spiritual and psychological necessities'; and where most things 'fit into symmetrical patterns and neatly segregated roles and activities'. (Martin 1981: 75)

There would seem to be three main reasons why this tradition of order grew up in this particular sector of society. First, since industrial production had at its core precise timing



patterns which had to be adhered to by the labour force, workers had to become orderly and disciplined to fit in with the rhythms of the machines which provided their bread and butter. Women controlled domestic time but in ways which were consistent with the over-arching requirements of capitalist production. Today this kind of argument could be updated by pointing out that now there is another external factor to be considered. Poverty and unemployment bring a new dependence upon the strictly timed distribution of state benefits. In the houses of the poor we hear the ticking of the state's clock.

Secondly, it has to be recognised that workers and their families have lived in environments which lacked enough space, particularly at home, so that with typically large families life had to be orderly for it to run at all smoothly. Twenty years ago, Mollie Harrington explained the link between spatial restriction and temporal patterns, when she wrote about the experience of working-class families living in the one or two-roomed flats that housed most Scottish workers.

The alternative to separation of functions in space, which is taken for granted in modern houses, is separation in time ... Management of time becomes supremely important; there can be little margin between meticulous order and chaos ... The admired and respected housewife is invariably someone who maintains control of time and keeps a high standard of cleanliness --- The one who maintains standards claims strong group support because, where the battle against chaos can never be relaxed, the one who does 'let things go' supplies at once a warning and a temptation. (Harrington 1965)



And thirdly and most generally, from the beginning, there was the need for the industrial working-classes to create order and meaning out of conditions of scarcity and precariousness when it came to money, employment, and life itself. To quote from Martin once more,

--- historically this culture of control offered the only hope of creating human dignity and a modicum of self-determination against all odds --- It made the difference between coping and debt, between survival and starvation, independence and the workhouse. (1981: 55)

And, similarly, Standish Meacham writes,

Respectability meant keeping one's self-respect, holding one's own against 'them'. Pursuit of respectability was not, for most, pursuit of the middle class --- Their struggle to attain respectability reflected nothing more than their desire, in the face of brutally disheartening economic facts, to lead an independent, orderly and less than brutal existence. (1977: 29)

**The distinctiveness of women's experience of time in a working-class context**

It seems to be women who 'preside' over social time in the working-class, via their position in the family. It is largely women who essentially organise, become responsible for, and predominantly take part in this time which is made up of smaller distinct periods of time each with its own qualities, even rules, setting it apart from each other period or type of time, be it other time within the family or time outside it. Men are not

involved as much with home and the family partly because they have always seen it as 'woman's place' but also because they simply are not physically there for a good deal of the time, whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation this is how life is. Men are more often not at home with the family owing<sup>to</sup> their continual presence in the labour market, to shiftwork, or working away on the boats or the rigs, or premature death. Even if women did work outside the home, which most of my sample did, this work was not continuous through life, they moved in and out of the labour force with home and family always being regarded as their sphere, except in extreme cases where men with severe illnesses, like Joan's father, had completely taken over the running of the home. Standish Meacham when talking about women writes,

.... their constant presence in the household, throughout the day, day after day, for years on end, unquestionably made them central figures there: "She is the constant factor of the home. Others come and go, but she never disappears ..." ... Oral and written evidence sustains the assertion, confirming that in the eyes of family members, it was she "who held things together". "She managed to find us all enough to eat". "Somehow mother managed". (Meacham 1977 :61)

Rosemary Crook makes a similar point when talking about Rhondda women and childrearing, where she considers women's greatest influence to lie,

The bulk of<sup>the</sup> childrearing fell to them, not only because it was considered 'right' in terms of their domestic responsibilities but also because the men were often not at home. (1982: 43)



'Family time', 'non-work time' or 'discretionary time' has been seen as residual, as something left over after we have completed our instrumental tasks in the formal institutions of society. However, if we stop to think for a moment we will realise that this 'social time' is crucial, for it is here where effective and expressive activity is intermingled with instrumental activity, especially in female roles. This is important for, as Csikzentmihalyi has pointed out, we all need to know, as we are growing up, that 'being an adult is not a total loss' and we need to be aware that adults 'are able to draw expressive experiences' even 'from their instrumental roles'. It is women who manage to pass on this vital information, by showing that instrumental and expressive roles can not only be joined but can also be enjoyed. Despite the fact that working-class women have always by necessity been incredibly hard workers both within and outside the family, coping with little money, poor facilities and large families, it is evident that their spirit for fun and enjoyment, for 'having a laugh', hardly ever wavers. Lucy lovingly recalled these qualities in her mother,

M' mum was a beautiful dancer. It was natural in her, I think --- I remember on winter's nights, y' know, y' weren't out t' play because it was too cold 'n' y'd nothing t' do, we'd come in quite miserable 'n' mum would say, "Well go 'n' tell Doreen Wood, May Laidlaw 'n' Jenny Miller. Go 'n' get them up 'n' I'll teach y' a few steps o' the Highland Fling". 'N' we'd come back up, the carpets were all rolled away, the shiny linoleum was every place 'n' y' all stood in a row --- We used t' have great fun, really great fun, y' know. Oh she did that regularly for us ---

And Amy Aitken recalled,

When it was a wet night 'n' we were teenagers  
mother used t' have a big fire in the bedroom 'n'  
we were all there 'n' we'd all take our turn  
singing.

Standish Meacham points out that Ramsay MacDonald, in his  
foreword to Robert Smillie's autobiography, believed the spirit  
of the labour movement was a result of the example given by  
working-class mothers,

Most of our faithful men owe to mothers or  
grandmothers the spirit which protects and  
maintains them. A poverty-stricken woman, harassed  
with family cares, but with a heart above them a',  
a woman who can sing old songs, tell fairy stories,  
enliven the imagination, and impart colour and the  
movement of romance is, as a rule, the creator of  
the character of uprightness, loyalty and  
steadfastness which men like Keir Hardie and Robert  
Smillie have possessed. (quoted in Meacham 1977  
:62)

The only sociological study which seems to give any import  
to the idea of the nature of time within the home and family  
being different for males and females, apart from small  
indications in time allocation or time budget studies, is that by  
Jahoda et al. In their study of unemployment, in Marienthal, the  
difference showed up quite clearly. In their chapter entitled  
'The Meaning of Time' they comment,

Time in Marienthal has a dual nature: it is  
different for men and women. For the men, the  
division of the days into hours has long since lost



all meaning . . . Getting up, the midday meal, going to bed are the only remaining points of reference. In between, time elapses without anyone really knowing what has taken place. (1972: 67 )

Jahoda et al point out that the term 'unemployed' only strictly applies to men for the women are merely unpaid not unemployed. Even if their source of outside work is no longer there, they still have the household to run which fully occupies and structures their day.

Their work has a definite purpose, with numerous fixed tasks, functions and duties that make for regularity . . . So for the women the day is filled with work. They cook, and scrub, stitch, take care of the children . . . (1972: 75 )

Interestingly then, the 'power' of women and their 'commitment' to time may be even more important in times of high unemployment than it is usually for maintaining the general rhythms and purpose of life in the family and community since,

— there is no evidence that <sup>the</sup> women's sense of time has been disrupted in the way it happened with the men. (1972: 77 )

Women come to feel that time in and of the family is their's to control as they wish. Because of their situated role women come to control the timetable or schedule of family life. That is to say, they control both the internal and external timetables of members of their families. Within the house it is mainly women who decide who is to do what and when, and they also decide

how to allocate their own limited time, as wives and mothers, to the various demands made upon it, how much time to devote to each family member and in what order. They also determine to a large extent how outside time demands, in terms of leisure time not work time, are accommodated to fit in with family life. They decide how much time should be devoted to the family as compared with competing demands from groups and individuals outside it. It seems that working-class women may have maintained a measure of power over the community and its morality despite massive societal changes precisely because they have kept a very firm hold over the time boundaries of the family.

### **The distinctiveness of repetitive time in a working-class context.**

Repetitive time is characterised by what I have called 'rituals of regularity and routine'. It is through these that time appears in the form of distinctly separate areas with different qualities and rules. Referring to this in my fieldwork diary in March 1981 I wrote,

It's O.K. for Ginny to hang out with her mates on the streets three nights a week because you know she's always home for her meals, that Friday night she'll look after the kids while you go to the

club, that on Saturday she'll help you with the shopping at Fine Fare and that on Sunday you'll all go to your mother's for tea. (Fieldwork Diary II, Mar. 1981)

The routines fall into daily, weekly and yearly patterns and correspond to Lauer's typology of periodicity, timing, sequence and synchronisation. Such temporal separation of activities has the effect of precisely establishing rigid boundaries around different contexts within which tasks and relationships are agreed upon by all concerned. These tasks and relationships are seen as being regulated in a certain way, to be of salience, and to be different from other tasks or relationships, either within the family or outside it. Daily, weekly and annual time patterns are experienced by us all to some extent but are particularly adhered to in working-class families.

### Daily Patterns

Set meal times are perhaps the best example of daily routine. Obviously eating together has useful advantages for those preparing the food but there is more to it than this. Working-class families tend to eat at least one meal together, unless prevented by shiftwork, if not more, and this is often the evening meal, more usually referred to as 'tea'. This means that none of the family strays away too far during the course of the day and it singles out a time when people are expected, within this certain context if nowhere else, to say in some detail what



they have been doing during the day and what they plan to do for the rest of the day. It is as much a time for talking, or even interrogating and explaining, as it is for eating. Meals also have the universal significance of symbolising 'solidarity' or friendship and equality so that physical or temporal segregation at meal times usually implies some kind of social gradation or social distance. An example of this would be father sitting at the head of the table and being served first, signifying his supposed importance as head of the household in terms of sex, age and wage-earning power. However, we must be careful here, as in a good many of these temporal examples, not to read too much into such occasions because frequently the women from large families in the past spoke of two sittings at meal times, but these symbolised nothing more than the simple fact that it was impossible to seat, say, ten children and two adults round one table. Joan Christie said,

Dad, I must admit, came first, always. Yes, he always came first 'n' ... er ... the table was set ... well, in our house wi' having a big family there was two sittings, y' know, sort o' two sittings ... maybe half o' them'd be sitting at dinner, either that or the young ones'd be fed first 'n' the table cleared away, out t' play 'n' then m' dad 'n' m' mother'd eat.

Another salient daily pattern was that of the daily visiting between mothers and daughters. This is probably more prominent among working-class women than their middle-class counterparts because a very large proportion of mothers and daughters still live reasonably close to each other. A great many of the women I



spoke to in the eighties still lived within a few streets of their mothers and/or daughters and displayed as we have seen a situation quite akin to the one found to exist by Young and Willmott in Bethnal Green nearly thirty years ago, about which they remarked,

The daily lives of many women are not confined to the places where they sleep, they are spread over two or more households, in each of which they regularly spend part of their time. (1965: 31)

This 'popping in and out' tended to be the case whether women were working or not, they found time somewhere to nip in for a cuppa and a chat. For those mothers and daughters who by the 1980s lived further away there was always a car or a bus, and even if mothers and daughters were not physically present at one or the other's house every day, a certain kind of presence was maintained by lengthy conversations on the phone or, in the case of Lucy Bremner and her daughters, on the C.B. radio, reflecting the advance in technology. This daily contact was frequently haphazard although in Kate II's case it was pretty rigid and in the case of Donna Dunn's family more rigid still. This is how she described a typical day while living at home,

Every day during the week it was all routine. Mum would drive Michelle to school, go t' gran's and have breakfast. Then mum and gran would go up the town to Mathieson's coffee shop - for all they'd just had their breakfast! Then they'd go round and get their messages, go back to gran's for dinner, after fetching Michelle from school. Then mum'd drive Michelle back to school and sit and talk to gran in the afternoon, or go up the town again, and

then back for Michelle at half past three and come home. That was it every day.

### Weekly Patterns

Again visiting among kin was a salient pattern at the weekly level but these visits were invariably more strictly timed than the more informal daily contacts. They were routinely set for more or less exact times when other female members of the family would also certainly be there, for instance Alice Clark went round to her mother's (Norah Briggs ) every Wednesday evening and her sisters always went too. Often weekly visiting was visiting that was more of a duty towards members of the extended family than of a social nature as we saw to be the case during the childhood of Alice Clark and Lucy Bremner.

Often this visiting of grandparents or aunts and uncles took place on Sundays which helped to give them their special character. This brings us on nicely to another temporal delineation of the week, that between religious time on Sunday and non-religious time the rest of the days. Up until the fourth generation, Sunday was definitely a day unlike any other day of the week. Children went to Sunday school, they wore different clothes and they could not play games outside. It was unusual for any housework other than washing the dishes to be done on Sunday. This necessarily meant that a lot of housework was done towards the end of the week on Fridays and Saturdays so that the



house would be spick and span for the holy day.

Housework provides another example of <sup>how</sup> periodicity and temporal sequence appeared in everyday life. I think just about every woman up until this last generation, when things do appear to be changing, spoke of doing certain jobs on certain days of the week, always the same chores on the same day. Rosemary Crook when writing about Rhondda women of the thirties and forties observed the same thing.

There was an order about every part of housework and a 'set' day for each task. Obviously individuals did not adhere rigidly to this but there was a general acceptance that major tasks such as washing should be done on a specific day (almost always Monday or Tuesday) . . . ironing and breadmaking would be done on Tuesday, the upstairs rooms cleaned on Wednesday, more baking on Thursday and the mats beaten and parlor cleaned, Friday. (1982:42)

In the theoretical piece on social time at the beginning, and in the descriptive piece about my own childhood, I claimed that different days seemed to vary qualitatively depending on what regularly happened on them. This aspect of social time has been noted by several writers. Sorokin and Merton quote William James who wrote,

An ingenious friend of mine was long puzzled to know why each day of the week had such a characteristic physiognomy for him. That of Sunday was soon noticed to be due to the cessation of the city's rumbling, and the sound of people's feet shuffling along the sidewalk; of Monday, to come from the clothes drying in the yard and casting a

white reflection on the ceiling; of Tuesday, etc.  
(quoted in Sorokin and Merton 1937:621)

Describing his childhood during the Edwardian era Robert  
Roberts writes,

Few who were young then will forget the great Friday night scouring ritual in which all the females of a house took part ... Almost every <sup>working</sup> hour of the week they devoted to cleaning and re-cleaning the same objects so that their family, drilled into slavish tidiness, could sit in state, newspaper covers removed for a few hours each Sunday evening. On Monday purification began all over again ... Only too well known was the Saturday morning custom common then and for long after of cleaning and clour-stoning the doorstep and then the pavement across a width that took in one's frontage. This chore helped project the image of a spotless household to the world at large. (Roberts 1971:21-22)

And Eileen Elias reminiscing about her childhood wrote,

I had in my vivid imagination a mental colour for each day of the week. Monday was a dull pewter grey, drab as the dank smell of the washing and the workaday world in general. By Tuesday things were looking up; the house was nutty-sweet with the smell of freshly ironed linen, so Tuesday was a pale silvery-blue. By Wednesday the week had really got going; pale blue was succeeded by azure like the summer sky. Thursday was green and peaceful; Friday, taking its cue from the fried fish which appeared on every dinner table down our road, was golden-brown like the tasty fillets hot from the pan. Saturday, a day on which anything might happen, was scarlet in glory. Sunday was white, pristine and untouched; after which the greyness of Monday reflected the greyness of my spirits. (Elias 1978:25)

## Yearly Patterns



These housework patterns were writ large in the scale of a year where, at least in the first generation, it was the custom to clean the house for the beginning of the new year in the same fashion as cleaning it for the new week. Nellie Allan told me about the custom of making sure that the last thing to be done in the old year was taking out the ashes from the fireplace. This was to make sure that no speck of dust was left in the house at the beginning of the new year.

Other yearly patterns revolved around annual events, some to do with the family and some to do with the community. The latter would be occasions like Whit walks and harvest festivals while the former would be Christmas, New Year, birthdays and holidays. Despite the fact that it was relatively easy for these emotionally charged occasions to go wrong as we saw to be the case at Connie's 80th birthday celebrations they were generally times of coming together as 'one big happy family'. They stressed and symbolised the idea of the family surviving quite nicely thank-you in an atmosphere of considerable equality, happiness and comfort, irrespective of objective conditions in 'normal' time outside the family context.

**The distinctiveness of women's experience of non-repetitive time in a working-class context**

Women have a different sense of time from men which derives in part, but only in part, from biology. Physically girls

develop earlier than boys. Puberty occurs some two to three years earlier among females, as does the accompanying 'growth spurt'. From puberty to menopause, menstruation and the complex biochemical rhythms it imposes gives a tempo to a female's life that a male cannot know. The menopause itself brings a specific and obvious end to one phase and signals the start of another in a woman's personal history.

One's sexual and sex-role development bear heavily on one's perception of time. Women, for example, know that their childbearing period begins with the onset of menstruation; men experience no clear-cut commencement of a period of childbearing years. They learn only that at some point in time sexual potency increases, that at another time it diminishes, and that at still a later point<sup>it</sup> may cease altogether. (Cottle 1976:182)

These biological rhythms have considerable sociological significance. They do not determine, but they condition: they condition experience and perception, and they provide elemental bases for identity and commonality, for the diverse bonds of sisterhood and brotherhood that can be found across the range of human societies. Timparano writes,

To maintain that since the "biological" is always presented to us as mediated by the "social", the "biological" is nothing and the "social" is everything, would be --- idealist sophistry. (Timparano: 16, quoted in Massey: 52)

Always we find that upon the biological rhythms each culture imposes a set of social conventions which mark out phases



of social development for the individual and these stages, though similar for males and females, are not precisely the same. Childhood, as a period of dependency, ends earlier for girls than for boys; so too on average does the age of adolescence or spinsterhood. Mostly women marry younger than men and with children assume a range of tasks temporally bound to the needs of infants and children. Commonly in our culture, it is women who take on the responsibilities of caring for the needs of ageing parents and that too has a degree of predictability about it in terms of the point in the life cycle at which it will occur, as well as its own mundane rhythms. If we think about the roles and status passages of males and females, it is obvious that they are not neatly synchronised.

Males and females somehow acquire or are taught to have a different sense of and feel for time. This occurs largely because of the fact that a female's sense of time is continuous throughout life in a way in which a male's is not. For small children, time connected with the home and family is the most important time, the most secure time. It assumes priority. These feelings tend to remain much the same for girls in later socialisation because they continue to remain closely identified with the realm of home and family. However, this is not the case for boys, who are encouraged to distance themselves early from this 'world of loving', so that in later life they will have no difficulty in leaving it to play their main roles in the world of work with its limited opportunities for expressive, affective action and its pervasive clock time.

We have seen in the ethnographic material much evidence of the kinds of temporal patterns which are commonplace in the lives of working-class women and which ultimately set them apart from men. We have seen how childhood was often abbreviated for girls who frequently assumed a range of adult responsibilities at a very early age. In large families where mothers were overburdened or in those where a parent was ill or had died, girls took on childminding, cooking, cleaning, washing and shopping. They often helped their grandparents or aunts and uncles with similar tasks.

Two points about these distinct temporal patterns deserve comment. First, from an early age women stand at the intersection of different sorts of time. Their family responsibilities and domestic duties bring two different types of time into conflict. I have shown how the demands of 'family time' clash with those of 'organisational time' in the form of the school schedule and we have seen how the 'stratification of time', as Lewis and Weigert call it, is not ordered hierarchically in what they take to be the usual way. 'Family time' frequently takes precedence over 'organisational time' with the externally imposed and formally determined demands of the education system ranking below the domestic ones. This situation in childhood and adolescence is merely the earliest of many points in a woman's life where 'family time' takes priority over the time frames of formal institutions.



Secondly, this early assumption of, or help with, domestic roles binds very young females into a set of family and kinship relations which, in the case of most working-class women, will continue to have importance throughout their lives. The strength of these ties must stem in part from the very early assumption of quasi-adult roles and entry into an effectively charged network that constitutes the 'world of women'. It is a world in which a child develops a sharp sense of the periodicity of the female life history, for status within it attaches to being 'a married woman', 'a mother', or 'a grandmother'. There grows up an awareness of that specifically female family history that binds the generations together. It is not difficult to explain why women should have a sharper appreciation of this generational time than men, for it is women who give birth to new life and, particularly in working-class communities, it is women who are most intimately connected with the management of the crucial events that mark the stages of the life course, from the cradle to the grave. Traditionally, at least, births, marriages and deaths were matters over which women exercised collective control. At each of these points women were drawn together in a co-operative intergenerational network to deal with matters that until very recently men knew very little about. Until the creation of the National Health Service, it was common to find one or two women, usually older women and often in the family, playing the role of midwife. Connie's mother delivered all Connie's children and two of Norah's. Similarly, at the other end of the life course, death was a matter for women. I have yet

to come across an example in accounts of working-class culture where a man laid out the dead, washed and dressed the corpse or organised the rituals of mourning and burial. Though today much of this has been 'professionalised', and it may be a man who contacts the undertaker, nevertheless it will almost certainly be women who attend most intimately to the care of the dying, women who summon the family and women who provide the funeral food and drink. Coping with births, deaths and illnesses is 'women's work' and the discharging of these responsibilities cements the bonds between women, grandmothers and great-aunts, mothers and their sisters and the daughters of the younger generation. Major life events thus take their meaning from the fact that women are enmeshed in a series of social ties between the generations. This is bound to give women a different orientation to, and perspective on, time.

### **Power**

It seems to be the above ties between women that lie at the heart of what might be called their power. In a sense it could be argued that 'generational' power has been weakened by the institutionalisation of social welfare, the professionalisation of many 'rites de passage', and formal education but the effects of such changes are by no means clear-cut and have been counteracted by the fact that basic improvements in sanitation and medicine, have led to the growth this century of co-existing multi-generational families, particularly on the female side,



which have never existed before. It must be stressed that as demography alters and the 'modern family' emerges the strength and power of the ties between women will likely increase. It is the case that women live considerably longer than men, have usually married men older than themselves and have become parents at a younger age than their partners so consequently there are more women around for longer meaning that they can have a greater impact than men on new generations. As we have seen it is not uncommon now for the maternal lines of a family to contain four or five generations of women. The point might be that patterns which are often said to be 'traditional' survivals from earlier cultural and structural circumstances are in fact intensely modern and will probably become more marked in the future. As part of the same process women are often left with a residual tie to their mothers for a very long time after their fathers have died. There did seem to be an emotional closeness between fathers and daughters, especially during childhood but this was lessened by the fact that for practical purposes of day-to-day living females worked closely with other females in the network.

To a much greater extent than men, women are part of an age-graded structure where each grade has specific responsibilities for the care, tutelage and control of others. However, this system is not simply hierarchical but rather cyclical in character, for instance, the daughter becomes the mother of her parents as they slip into old age and infirmity. Few things demonstrate better this care, tutelage and control by women of women than the business of marriage. Mothers and grandmothers

offer advice and guidance in no uncertain terms to young women of the family about to be married and we have seen particularly in the case of Alice Clark . what incredible lengths families will go to to control the selection of mates. Similarly Maisie Agnew told me when her mother, Aggie, was in her late teens she had gone to work in Canada. While there she decided to get married and conveyed this information to her parents in Scotland. On hearing of her daughter's plans Maisie's grandmother summoned Aggie back home by saying that her father had had to have his leg off and was very ill. When Aggie's boat arrived at the docks her father, on both legs, was waiting for her on the quayside. Her mother's tale had been a ploy to stop her daughter marrying in Canada.

Connected with this, women also hold a certain amount of power because embedded as they are in a trans-generational network they become the 'gatekeepers' of family and community history, who erect 'structures of perceiving' for future generations. Past time is held in check by women so that what is seen to be embarrassing, degrading or a family weakness, that which does not fit in, is 'forgotten', not talked about, with such topics ranging from getting into debt to epilepsy. Lucy Bremner related the following tale,

I remember m' mum going wi' cardboard in the sole of her shoe 'n' y' could o' seen y' face in the top o' them, they were so well polished ... And we met the minister 'n' he stopped 'n' spoke t' m' mum 'n' this other woman ... came past ... 'n' she was filthy. The minister walked over 'n' he handed her



a threepenny bit 'n' he came back 'n' said, "I feel so sorry for them, they've got nothing". Now I wasn't supposed t' hear anything, m' mum had never said a word ... she must have forgotten that I was in the kitchen ... I heard her saying t' dad, "Fancy, that was old Ross giving that woman threepence. I wonder what he'd o' said if I'd shown him the soles o' my shoes 'n' what was in my purse. "

When I specifically asked Lucy's daughter about the above anecdote she said quite definitely that she had never heard the story.

No. I don't think even mum would talk about these days to us really.

These silences are eloquent, for as the women unwittingly construct their histories of the family, neighbourhood, community and class, they 'tidy them up', make them altogether neater than they really are. Order and respectability are maintained through convenient omissions. The effect is to transmit, through these fragments<sup>of</sup> times past, these isolated recollections of family and local events, a moral order. The transmission of moral rules takes place through the symbols and the silences in often re-told stories. In working-class areas, women are the main custodians of these, and what matters is not only what is passed on explicitly from mother to daughter, or grandmother to granddaughter: what is left unsaid also counts. Interviewing several generations of women from the same family reveals that an astonishing amount is left unsaid. Many of the most profound 'silences' relate to issues of fundamental importance in the

lives of women - menstruation, contraception, childbirth, abortion - all matters of women's sexuality. The bonds between the generations of women seem to consist, in part, in the collective keeping of female 'secrets', secrets understood less by instruction than by inference from the silences. Similarly, Roberts notes,

--- the women respondents said they were very close to their mothers, and somehow the scant shared knowledge about female 'secrets' cemented this bond, which almost always proved to be of lifelong duration. (Roberts: 18-19)

For the working-class women in my sample the things which gave structure and texture to their lives were family events: marriages and births, weddings and divorces, illnesses and bereavements. All of these served to establish and maintain links, intergenerational links, among the women and an appreciation of a sequenced life course.

## AFTERWORD

Many of the arguments appearing in Chapter Eleven were written up as a paper, **Hidden Rhythms: Hidden Powers? Women and Time in Working Class Culture**, which was presented to the International Oral History Conference in Barcelona in March 1985. This paper has been included in the thesis (following this page) because in it the theoretical arguments and the empirical data were condensed and combined so that their relationship to each other is made more apparent than in the thesis. In this way, the paper complements and supplements the final chapter. Although Brian Elliott was involved in the organizing of this paper and his help was greatly appreciated, I would like to make it clear that I was the principal author, providing the empirical material and the ideas which stemmed from that.

## APPENDIX

### SUMMARY OF FOUR GENERATIONS

#### CHILDHOOD

##### 'First' Generation

Grace Anderson (93) b. 1887 - 5th child, 3rd girl (family of 8).

Mother sewed in house; father drove carriage.

Father died aged 43 when Mary 13. Worked while at school.

Mother died at over 70.

Mary Arnott (86) b. 1894 - 7th child, youngest daughter (9).

Mother never worked; father worked in foundry.

Mother died aged 77; father aged 82 (5 years after mother).

Edith Archer (86) b. 1894 - 2nd child, eldest daughter (10).

Mother never worked; father worked at pit.

Grace took time off school to work in house.

Father died when he was 84; mother when she was 85.



**Connie Armstrong (84)** b. 1896 - 1st girl, seventh child (15, including one adopted).

Mother was a full-time midwife; father worked in foundry.

**Amy Aitken (82)** b. 1898 - 10th child, youngest daughter (10).

Mother sewed at home; father worked in sugar house.

**Nellie Allan (80)** b. 1900 - 2nd child, eldest daughter (4).

Mother worked as nurse; father worked in foundry.

Mother lived till she was 91; father till 81.

**Maisie Agnew (76)** b. 1904 - 3rd child, eldest living daughter (12).

Mother never worked; father worked in foundry. Went to his work.

Time off school to work in house. Formally employed while still at school delivering milk in morning before school started.

Exemption at 13. Helped in house.

### **'Second' Generation**

**Bella Bolton (69)** b. 1911 - 2nd child, only daughter (3).

Mother worked as domestic, midwife, munitions worker; father coal-filler and airman.

Disappointed at leaving school.

**Cissie Bell (66)** b. 1914 - 2nd child, 2nd daughter, effectively first (4).

Mother and father worked in chip shop.

Father killed at end of war, 1918, when she was four; mother died from TB of the spine in 1922 when she was eight. Lived with aunty.

**Norah Briggs (66)** b. 1914 - eldest child of eight.

Daughter of Connie Armstrong.

Mother didn't work because she helped Agnes' grandmother who did. (Worked much later in life after father lost his leg).

Father worked in foundry. He helped in house. Norah went to his work.

Spent a lot of time with aunt.

**Janie Black (65)** b. 1915 - oldest child and daughter (2).

Father unknown; mother died when she was six, from gastric ulcer. Lived with granny.

**Kate Brodie (63)** b. 1917 - 2nd eldest daughter (12).

Mother part-time cleaner; father coal miner (helped in house - wouldn't hang out washing)

Disappointed at leaving school.

Father died when he was 62 from cancer.

**Lucy Bremner (56)** b. 1924 - 4th child, 2nd daughter (8).

Mother didn't work; father bath enameller in foundry. Lucy went

to his work.

Time off school to work in house. Disappointed at leaving.

Father died aged 70, heart attack.

### **'Third' Generation**

**Alice Clark (47)** b. 1933 - eldest child of 4.

Father worked in foundry and did odd jobs in his spare time (fire service during war) mother worked in munitions during Second World War.

**Joan Christie (46)** b. 1934 - 4th child, 2nd daughter (7).

Father miner, army, borstal warden, crane driver; mother worked in munitions and cleaner in Infirmary. Role reversal.

Lived in room 'n' kitchen.

Worked in house a lot.

**Liz Chalmers (45)** b. 1935 - Eldest of 5.

(Daughter of Janie Black, mother of Wendy Drake).

Father miner, brickworks; mother in munitions.

Father helped in house, mother ill.

Liz worked in mother's house and granny's.

**Kate Cowan (45)** b. 1935. Eldest of 2.

(Daughter of Kate Brodie, mother of Kate Dickson)

Father worked in foundry, army, back in foundry (46 years), security man; mother worked in wet fish shop in war; ward's maid.

Lived with granny till about 12.

Granny had 12 children

- 3 died, 1 married, so 8 in house, incl. twins she had when 44  
that only 3 years younger than Kate. *Kate*

**Cissie Campbell(42)** b. 1938. Eldest of 10.

(Daughter of Cissie Bell, mother of Cissie Davidson)

Mother and father worked in fruit shop.

Stayed off school to look after house and kids.

#### **'Fourth' Generation**

**Wendy Drake (25)** b. 1956. 2nd child, 2nd daughter (5)

(Granddaughter of Janie Black, daughter of Liz Chalmers)

Father in and out of employment through illness - in foundry  
to start with, in 1981 on gritting lorries in winter (had been in  
clay mine); mother tattie fields, mill threshing, skinned  
rabbits; brick works.

Helped in mother and gran's house a lot. Hardly at school,  
largely to do with illness. Hated school.

**Michelle Drysdale (23)** b. 1957. Eldest daughter of 5.

(Daughter of Joan Christie)

Father worked in BP; mother didn't work.

Stayed with aunt at weekends.

Hated school.

**Carole Dillon (21)** b. 1959. 2nd child, 2nd daughter (5).

(Granddaughter of Connie Armstrong, daughter of Alice Clark)



Father worked in various manual jobs before becoming an English teacher; mother never worked.

Hated school, played truant.

**Cissie Davidson (20)** b. 1960. Eldest daughter of 4.

(Granddaughter of Cissie Bell, daughter of Cissie Campbell)

Father worked in McCowan's sweet factory; mother part-time cleaner.

Helped a lot in house.

Hated school.

**Sue Day (20)** b. 1960. Only child.

Father worked at BP; mother at Havelocks

**Kate Dickson (19)** b. 1960. Youngest child of two.

Father lorry driver. Died when she was 8. Mother worked part-time till father died and then went full-time driving for school meals.

**Donna Dunn (19)** b. 1960. Only child, 1 step-sister.

(Great granddaughter of Grace Anderson, granddaughter of Bella Bolton )

Father left when she was 5; mother started work in chemist.

Step-father works on oil rigs; mother doesn't work.

Worked in house.

## TEENAGE - LEAVING SCHOOL/WORK.

### 'First' Generation

All left school at 14, not much comment about it one way or other in this generation, accepted as fact of life.

All gave wages to mother.

Grace Anderson 1901 - in service/cook. Started at 6 a.m.

Mary Arnott 1908 - laundry. 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. 4s/week.

Edith Archer 1908 - mill (out of house 6.15 a.m. to 8.45 p.m.)  
6s/week; mill. 6.15 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. 5s/week.

Connie Armstrong 1910 - laundry, similar hours to Mary presumably -  
finished lunch-time on Fridays. 4s/week.

Amy Aitken 1912 - mill. 6 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Nellie Allan 1914 - shop assistant. 8.00 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Moved into munitions as First World War progressed.

Maisie Agnew 1918 - ward's maid. 6.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. 6/6 a  
week (lived in); domestic in house; cook general.

## **First World War**

**Grace Anderson** - 27. Worked munitions. Tam away 6 years. 2 children.

**Mary Arnott** - 20. Engaged.

**Edith Archer** - 20. Two brothers prisoners of war. One died, one suffered terrible injuries.

**Connie Armstrong** - 18. Married, one baby. Husband not away.

**Amy Aitken** - 16

**Edith Campbell** - 14. Soup kitchen. Brother in war.

**Meg McKenzie** - 10

## **'Second' Generation**

All gave wages to mother

**Bella Bolton** - started 1925. Falkirk Hosiery, overlooker.  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Cissie Bell** - 1928. Shop assistant, 7/6; cleaner.

**Norah Briggs** - 1928. Belling black shop in Falkirk Foundry,  
13s/week.

**Janie Black - 1929.** In service, 5s. 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Kate Brodie - 1931.** In service, 6s; shop assistant in wet fish shop.

**Lucy Bremner - 1938.** Shop assistant in drapery, 2/6 to 4/6 to 6s a week; dispatch Co-op bakehouse, 15s, 7.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.; 1939 - managaress of egg shop, 12/6; assistant in baker's shop; 1940 - Household Stores; called up.

### **Second World War**

#### **'First' Generation:**

**Grace Anderson, 52** Worked in foundry with fitter.

**Mary Arnott, 45**

**Edith Archer, 45** Worked back in mill sewing government stores.

**Amy Aitken, 41**

**Edith Campbell, 39** Worked as a collector.

**Maisie Agnew, 35**

**'Second' Generation** (see details for this generation in Marriage section)

#### **'Third' Generation**

All gave wages to mother.

**Joan Christie** Exemption from school - mother ill. Started 1947

- Bishop's department store, 27s, 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.; 1948 -

Co-op, counter assistant, £2.6s a week, took exams in maths and



english.

T.B. at 18

**Liz Chalmers** Not at school much in last year, mother ill.

1949 - Dun and Wilson's Bookbinders, 26s - after 2 years went up to \$5.

**Kate Cowan** Bakery and brickworks.

**Cissie Campbell** Barr's lemonade factory; Sunnyside Foundry, driller, 7.30 a.m.

#### **'Fourth' Generation**

**Wendy Drake** Left school at 15, 1971, and took charge of household while mother out working in brickworks.

**Michelle Drysdale** Left school early, 1972. Worked in house to begin with. Havelock's factory, sewer. Worked as bar maid in evenings and also sang in pub.

Social activities - pubs, dancing, ice-rink.

**Carole Dillon** 1975 started as office junior in small foundry, then to moved to Carron where promoted to junior wages clerk; shop assistant in boutique; sport's attendant at sport's centre.

**Cissie Davidson** 1976 Clarendon Hotel; McCowan's sweet factory.

**Sue Day** 1976 clothing factory; Havelock's factory.

Social activities - youth club, pubs.

**Kate Dickson** 1977 Havelock's factory, overlocker.

Social activities - parties, discos, youth clubs.

**Donna Dunn** 1977 Trainee hairdresser.

Social activities - parties, pubs, discos.

## **MARRIAGE**

### **'First' Generation**

**Grace Anderson** - married Tam (17) when she was 18 in 1905. He was brother of housekeeper at rectory. Known him 'all her days'. Engaged a year; married in church; tea at Grace's mother's. Pregnant. Employer gave them house and then moved to room and kitchen. Tam worked at coal depot and away in war.

Grace worked as housekeeper for eight years after first child born; unpaid midwife; nights on munitions at Klondykes in First World War; foundry during Second World War with fitter.

**Mary Arnott** - married Sandy(28) when she was 26 in 1920.

Engaged during war; married in manse; tea at Mary's mother's.

Lived with mother all married life (she was youngest).

Sandy worked in a shop.

**Edith Archer** - married Les (22) when she was 28 in 1922. He

lived near her aunt. Engaged; married in manse. Own house i.e.

rented single end, then moved to room and kitchen.

Back to mill three times after married and in catering at Co-op.

Husband miner.

**Connie Armstrong** - married Jimmy (25) in 1914 when she was 18. 8 months pregnant.

Married in manse.

Own house - rented room and kitchen.

He worked in foundry; she didn't work to begin with, continued to help mother. Worked from age of 47 to 63 - in Admiralty stores and then as cleaner, on shifts, in British Aluminium, after Jimmy invalided. (Youngest daughter looked after dad instead of getting job while Connie worked).

Jimmy looked after children and did housework, "as long as nobody seen him".

**Amy Aitken** - married Jack (same age) when she was 21 in 1921. Only had one boyfriend.

Married in manse, followed by tea at Jack's mother's.

They lived with her mother for two years - on her own by this

time, Amy youngest.

He was blacksmith; she charred and sewed.

**Nellie Allan** - married Billy (25) when she was 20 in 1920. He was small-shopkeeper. Lived in rooms.

**Maisie Agnew** - married Rab (30) when she was 20 in 1924. Manse; tea in Maisie's mother's house. Room for nine months, then house. Rab engine driver; she didn't work - children and Rab on 12 shifts which sometimes meant he was away for a few days. Rab died aged 61.

#### **'Second' Generation**

**Bella Bolton** - married Bob (27) when she was 25 in 1935.

Met at dancing, already knew each other.

Engaged three months, married three months later. Church. Tea at mother's.

Lived at Bella's mother's i.e. Grace Anderson for 7 years. Had 2 children there.

Bob was moulder at Cockburn's foundry.

**Cissie Bell** - married Hamish (25) when she was 17 in 1931.

Uncle's friend. First boyfriend.

Married in register office.

Hamish was fruit hawker-cum-small tradesman. Cissie worked in shop.



**Norah Briggs** - married Alan (18) when she was 18 in 1932.

Met at work - worked together and his dad their foremen.

Manse of Baptist Church. Pregnant(?).

Lived with his parents for 3 years till birth of second child.

**Janie Black** - married Joe (27) when she was 19 in 1935.

Met at pictures.

Manse. Did have reception in a hall.

Two months pregnant.

Joe was miner; then in brickworks. Janie didn't work after marriage, except in munitions! Husband helped.

Lived with her granny for two years. Then got room 'n' kitchen.

**Kate Brodie** - married Wilf (18) when she was 18 in 1935.

Manse. Pregnant.

Wilf worked in foundry; forces; foundry. She worked on Buttercup van.

Lived in room at Wilf's brother's.

Later worked as part-time cleaner and was ward's maid, from age of 39 to 54.

### **Second World War**

**Bella Bolton** 28. Bob (31) away 5 years, never out of country. Son 15 months, expecting first daughter when he went away.

Bella worked part-time in Dun and Wilson's Bookbinders.

**Janie Black 24.** Joe (31) in pit, 'reserved occupation'.

Janie worked in Nobel's foundry on munitions, ~~16~~ a week, full-time.

**Kate Brodie 22.** Wilf (22) in Terri's. Away 6 years, POW.

Kate back to Stirling to live with mother and work in wet fish shop, full-time.

Children - Kate 4, Andrew 3 months. Mother looked after them.

**Lucy Bremner 15.** Eldest brother killed.

Father in war work at Hillington.

Fire-watching for Household Supplies.

ATS 1943 - 1946 (19 - 22)

Receptionist/bookeeper in various industrial hostels.

**Lucy Bremner -** married Stan (27) when she was 25 in 1949.

Register office in Granton. Stopped work.

Lived in room of Stan's digs and then "wee house" in miner's row before moving to a prefab.

Worked part-time in fish and chip shop, late 50s; part-time insurance agent; full-time agent for Household Supplies.

### **'Third' Generation**

**Alice Clark -** married Eddie (26) when she was 21 in 1954.

Met when 17.

**Joan Christie** - married Mick (22) when she was 22 in 1956.

Catholic church. No mention of reception or honeymoon.

Mick works at chemical works.

**Liz Chalmers** - married Fred (23) when she was 18 in 1953. Met when 15. No engagement, married in manse. Tea at her mother's. Stayed with his mother and then bought room 'n' kitchen that was later condemned.

Fred working in clay mine when married, unemployed for years; seasonal driving job.

Liz worked in tattie fields and at mill threshing; Stein brickworks for 11 years 1968 - 1979 (34 - 45).

**Kate Brodie** - married Mark (21) when she was 21 in 1956.

Church of Scotland.

Met him when 15. Went away to do National Service.

Stayed with mother for year then bought room 'n' kitchen, with outside toilet on stair.

Mark lorry driver; Kate driver on school meals. Latterly also bar maid.

**Cissie Campbell** - married Rob (21) when she was 19 in 1957. Engaged then he went off to National Service.

Met at work.

Rob in and out of jobs.

Lived with her mum then bought room 'n' kitchen which later

condemned.

Part-time cleaner.

#### **'Fourth' Generation**

**Wendy Drake** - married Joe (22) when she was 19 in 1975.

2nd boyfriend, met at disco when she was 15, he was 18. From Westfield. Register office.

Lived with mother.

Got (1st) job in Co-op. Now works as school cleaner.

**Carole Finlay** married Daryl (25) when she was 20 in 1979.

**Michelle Drysdale** - married Roger (20) when she was 20 in 1980.

Catholic church.

Pregnant.

Met at pub. From Linlithgow Bridge.

Lived with mother for 7 months, had baby by this time.

**Cissie Davidson** - married Cameron (19) when she was 18 in 1978.

Pregnant.

Lived with mother four months.

**Sue Day** married Steve (19) when she was 16 in 1976. Register office.



**Kate Dickson** - married Ian (19) when she was 17 in 1977.

Church. Engaged after marriage.

Pregnant.

Lived with her mother then his mother. Council house.

**Donna Dunn** - married John (21)

when she was 19 in 1975. Register office.

Pregnant.

Lived with her mother. Council flat.

#### CHILDREN

#### 'First' Generation

**Grace Anderson** - had 5 children and one miscarriage - two (twins)

died at birth, three survived - 2 boys + 1 girl.

From age of 18 to 35.

All born at home.

Son, Andrew - whooping cough + ruptured spleen, aged 5.

**Mary Arnott** - two children, 1 boy + 1 girl.

From 27 to 28 (not married till 26)

Both born at home, i.e. mother's home in this case.

**Edith Archer** - 6 children.

From 29 - 40.

5 born at home, last one in hospital. 6 to 7 weeks in after each child.

**Connie Armstrong** - 8 children. (1 died).

From 18 - 36.

All at home. Delivered by her mother.

**Amy Aitken** - 5 children.

From 21 to 37

All born at home.

2 died as children, 3 years and 7 months. Daughter died aged 25 (1953) from TB.

**Nellie Allan** - 1 child, aged 21. Born at home.

Took rheumatoid arthritis in teens and permanently crippled.

**Maisie Agnew** - 2 children when she was 21 and 22. Both born at home.

None of husbands present at birth.

### **'Second' Generation**

**Bella Bolton** - 4 surviving children, three daughters, 1 son.

First child died at birth.

From 27 - 37.

All born in hospital.

**Cissie Bell - 14 children.**

From teens to early 40s.

First one born in hospital, all rest at home.

3 died as babies, one died aged 4 from meningitis, youngest daughter, died in mid-20s from brain haemorrhage.

**Janie Black - 6 children.**

From 20 - 31.

All born at home.

1 died, aged 9 months, from silent pneumonia.

**Kate Brodie - 2 children.**

18 when she had first baby and 22 when she had second.

Husband away in war till 1945.

Had hysterectomy when 38.

**Lucy Bremner - 4 children, 3 girls and 1 boy.**

From 26 - 34.

2 at home and two in hospital.

3rd and 4th baby rhesus.

No husband's present.

**'Third' Generation**

**Alice Clark** - 5 children from when she was 23-29.

3 born at home, 2 in hospital.

**Joan Christie** - 5 children from when she was 22-33.

3 born at home, 2 in hospital. No complications.

**Liz Chalmers** - 6 children, 3 girls + 2 boys.

From 18 to 27.

First two in hospital, last 3 in house. Husband at birth of last one.

Couldn't get pill - varicose veins and doctor didn't believe in it.

Angela died when 18 from peritonitis.

**Kate Cowan** - 2 children, 1 boy + 1 girl.

Aged 23 and 25.

Both in hospital. Mark forceps.

**Cissie Campbell** - 4 children.

From 21 to 30. First 3 in 4 years.

3 in hospital, last one at home.

Only one husband present at births, Fred Chalmers.



### **'Fourth' Generation**

**Wendy Drake (21) - 1 daughter. Born in hospital. Joe at birth.**

**Michelle Drysdale (20) - 1 daughter. Hospital. Roger at birth.**

**Carole Dillon (21) - 1 daughter. Hospital. Daryl at birth.**

**Cissie Davidson (19) - 1 daughter. Hospital. Cameron at birth.**

**Sue Day (17) - 1 son. Hospital. Steve not at birth.**

**Kate Dickson (18) - 1 daughter. Hospital. Ian there.**

**Donna Dunn (20) - 1 daughter. Hospital. Husband present.**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABRAMS, P. 1972. *Being and Becoming in Sociology* University of Durham.
- ABRAMS, P. 1982. *Historical Sociology* Bath: Pitman Press
- ANDERSON, M. 1985. The Emergence of the Modern Life Cycle in Britain in *Social History* Vol 10: 1: 69-87
- ARCANA, J. 1979. *Our Mothers' Daughters* London: The Women's Press
- ARIES, P. 1973 *Centuries of Childhood*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- BARKER, D. 1972. Young People and Their Homes: Spoiling and "Keeping Close" in a South Wales Town in *Sociological Review* 20(4)
- BARKER, D.L. & ALLEN, S. 1976. *Sexual Divisions and Society: Process and Change*, London: Longman.
- BARKER, D.L. & ALLEN, S. 1976. *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, London: Longman.
- BARNETT, J. 1977. Women's History and Oral History: An Outline Bibliography in *Oral History*, Women's History Issue 5, 2.

- BART, P.B. 1971. Sexism in Social Science: From The Gilded Cage To The Iron Cage, Or The Perils of Pauline in Journal of Marriage and the Family 33
- BELL, C. and ROBERTS, H. (eds.) 1984. Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice, Thetford: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- BERGER, P.L. and BERGER, B. 1977. Sociology: A Biographical Approach, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- BERGER, B and BERGER, P.L. 1973 The War Over The Family: Capturing the Middle Ground, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- BERGER, P. and LUCKMANN, T. 1979. The Social Construction of Reality. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- BERNARD, J. 1976. The Future of Marriage, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- BERTAUX, D. (Ed.) 1981. Biography and Society. The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences New York: Sage Publications Inc.
- BEYNON, H. 1975. Working For Ford Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd.
- BIRDWHISTELL, R. L. 1970. Sequence and Tempo in Kinesics and Context Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- BLAXTER, M. and PATERSON, E. 1982. Mothers and Daughters. A Three-generational study of Health Attitudes and Behaviour, London: Heinemann.
- BOTT, E. 1964. Family and Social Network, London: Tavistock.
- BRISTOL WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP (eds.) 1979. Half the Sky, London: Virago.
- BROGGER, S. 1977. Deliver Us From Love London: Quartet Books Ltd.

- BURR, W.R. 1973 **Theory Construction and the Sociology of the Family**, New York.
- BUTLER, 1981 Overview on Aging: Some Biomedical, Social and Behavioral Perspectives in FOGEL, R.W. et al **Aging: Stability and Change in the Family** London: Academic Press
- BUTT, J. 1978. Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-39 in MacDougall, I. (ed) **Essays in Scottish Labour History** Edinburgh: John Donald.
- CAMPBELL, R.H. 1961. **Carron Company** Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd.
- CAMPBELL, R.H. 1980. **The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry** Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd.
- CASSIRER, E. 1977. **The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Vol. 2: Mythical Thought** London: Yale University Press
- CHAMBERLAIN, M. 1977. **Fenwomen: A Portrait of Women in An English Village** London: Virago Ltd.
- CHAMBERLAIN, M. and RICHARDSON, R. 1983 **Life and Death in Oral History** 11:1 31- 43
- COMER, L. 1974. **Wedlocked Women** Leeds: Feminist Books
- CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES, BIRMINGHAM, WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP. 1978. **Women Take Issue. Aspects of Women's Subordination.**
- COTTLE, T.J. 1976. **Perceiving Time: A Psychological Investigation with Men and Women** New York: Wiley and Sons.
- CROOK, R. 'Tidy Women': Women In The Rhondda Between The Wars in **Oral History** Vol 10, No. 2.
- CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. 1981. **Lesiure and Socialisation Social Forces** 60: 332 - 340



- DE GRAZIA, S. 1962. *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* New York: Anchor Books
- DELPHY, C. & BARKER, D. L. *Women and the Family* Tavistock
- DEMOS and BOOCOCK (eds.) 1978. *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, (A.J.S. Vol. 84, supplement), Chicago" University of Chicago Press.
- DOUGLAS, M. 1963. *The Lele of the Kasai*, London: Oxford University Press.
- DOUGLAS, M. 1970. *Purity and Danger*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- DOUGLAS, M. 1973. *Rules and Meanings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- DOWLING, C. 1982. *The Cinderella Complex* Glasgow: Fontana
- DURKHEIM, E. 1912. *Les Formes Elementaires de la Vie Religieuse: Le Systeme Totemique en Australie* Paris: Alcan
- ELDER, G. 1974. *Children of the Great Depression*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- EISENSTADT, S.N. 1964. *From Generation to Generation* London: Collier Macmillan
- ELDER, G. 1978. *Family History and the Life Course in Hareven*, T.K. (ed) *Transitions: The Family and the Life Course in Historical Perspective* New York: Academic Press
- ELIAS, E. 1978. *On Sundays We Wore White*, London: W.H. Allen.
- ERIKSON, E. 1982. *Childhood and Society*, London: Triad/Paladin.
- ERIKSON, E. 1968. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, New York: W.W. Norton.

- EVANS-PRITCHARD, E. E. 1940. *The Nuer* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- FALLDING, H. 1961. *Family and the Idea of a Cardinal Role in Human Relations* 14
- FLETCHER, R. 1977. *The Family and Marriage in Britain* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- FOGEL, R.W. et. al. (eds.) 1981. *Ageing: Stability and Change in the Family*, London: Academic Press.
- FOREMAN, A. 1977. *Femininity As Alienation: Women and the Family in Marxism and Psychoanalysis* London: Pluto Press Ltd.
- FRANSELLA, F. and FROST, K. 1977. *On Being a Woman*, London: Tavistock.
- FRIDAY, N. 1981. *My Mother, My Self*, Glasgow: Collins and Co. Ltd.
- FRIEDAN, B. 1976. *The Feminine Mystique* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- GAULDIE, E. 1974. *Cruel Habitations, A History of Working-Class Housing 1780-1918* London: Allen and Unwin
- GAVRON, H. 1970. *The Captive Wife*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- GEERTZ, C. 1973. *Person, Time and Conduct in his The Interpretation of Cultures* U.S.A.: Basic Books Inc.
- GERSHUNY, J. 1978. *After Industrial Society. The Emerging Self-Service Economy* London: Macmillan
- GERSHUNY, J. 1983. *Social Innovation and the Division of Labour* Oxford: Oxford University Press

GLASGOW WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP 1983. **Uncharted Lives. Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences, 1850 - 1982** Glasgow: Pressgang.

GLUCKMAN, M. 1963. **Gossip and Scandal in Current Anthropology**

GRANOVETTER, M. 1984. **Small is bountiful: labour markets and establishment size. American Sociological Review** 49: 323 - 34

GREGORY, D. 1978. **Social Change and Spatial Structures in** Carlstein, T., et al (ed.) **Timing Space and Spacing Time: Vol 1 Making Sense of Time** London: Edward Arnold

GROSNETH, E. 1970. **The Dysfunctions of the Husband-Provider** Role paper at XI International Family Conference, London

GURVITCH, G. 1964. **The Spectrum of Time** Dordrecht - Holland: D. Reider

HAGESTAD, G.O. 1981. **Problems and Promises in the Social Psychology of Intergenerational Relations in Fogel, R.W., et al Aging: Stability and Change in the Family** London: Academic Press

HALL, C. 1974. **The History of the Housewife in Spare Rib** 26

HALL, S. & JEFFERSON, T. (eds.) 1979. **Resistance Through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain**, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd.

HAMMER, S. 1976. **Daughters and Mothers: Mothers and Daughters**, New York: Signet.

HAREVEN, T.K. 1971. **The History of the Family as an Interdisciplinary Field in Rabb, T.K. and Rotberg, R.I. (eds) The Family in History** New York

HAREVEN, T.K. 1977. **Family Time and Historical Time in Daedalus** Spring 11:57-70.

HAREVEN, T.K. 1978. **Transitions: The Life Course in Historical Perspective** New York: Academic Press



GLASGOW WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP 1983. **Uncharted Lives. Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences, 1850 - 1982** Glasgow: Pressgang.

GLUCKMAN, M. 1963. **Gossip and Scandal in Current Anthropology** 63

GRANOVETTER, M. 1984. **Small is bountiful: labour markets and establishment size. American Sociological Review** 49: 323 - 34

GREGORY, D. 1978. **Social Change and Spatial Structures in Carlstein, T., et al (ed.) Timing Space and Spacing Time: Vol 1 Making Sense of Time** London: Edward Arnold

GROSNETH, E. 1970. **The Dysfunctions of the Husband-Provider** Role paper at XI International Family Conference, London

GURVITCH, G. 1964. **The Spectrum of Time** Dordrecht - Holland: D. Reider

HAGESTAD, G.O. 1981. **Problems and Promises in the Social Psychology of Intergenerational Relations in Fogel, R.W., et al Aging: Stability and Change in the Family** London: Academic Press

HALL, C. 1974. **The History of the Housewife in Spare Rib** 26

HALL, S. & JEFFERSON, T. (eds.) 1979. **Resistance Through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain**, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd.

HAMMER, S. 1976. **Daughters and Mothers: Mothers and Daughters**, New York: Signet.

HAREVEN, T.K. 1971. **The History of the Family as an Interdisciplinary Field in Rabb, T.K. and Rotberg, R.I. (eds) The Family in History** New York

HAREVEN, T.K. 1977. **Family Time and Historical Time in Daedalus** Spring 71: 57-70.

HAREVEN, T.K. 1978. **Transitions: The Life Course in Historical Perspective** New York: Academic Press



HAREVEN, T. K. & LANGENBACH, R. 1979. **Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City in New England** Methuen & Co. Ltd.

HAREVEN, T.K. <sup>1982</sup> **Family Time and Industrial Time; the relationship between the family and work in a New England industrial community.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

HAREVEN, T.K. 1981. *Historical Changes in the Timing of Family Transitions in FOCEL (A al) eds: AGING: Stability and Change in the Family*

HARRINGTON, M. 1965. **Resettlement and Self-Image in Social Relations** 18: 115-37

HARVIE, C. 1981. **No Gods and Precious Few Heroes.** Scotland 1914-1980, London: Edward Arnold.

HILL, R. 1970. **Family Development in Three Generations** Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman

HOGGART, R. 1973. **The Uses of Literacy** Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

HOLTER, H. 1970. **Sex Roles and Social Structure** Oslo University Press

HUNT, P. 1980. **Gender and Class Consciousness** London: Macmillan

HUTT, A. 1937. **The Post-War History of the British Working-Class** London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

JACKSON, B. 1972. **Working-Class Community** Harmondsworth: Penguin Ltd.

JAHODA, M., LAZARSFELD, P., ZEISEL, H. 1972. **Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community** London: Tavistock

JAMIESON, L. 1983. **Growing Up in Scotland in Glasgow Women's Studies Group Unchartered Lives: Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences 1850-1982** Glasgow: Pressgang

- JANEWAY, E. 1977. **Man's World, Woman's Place: A Study in Social Mythology**, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- JEPHCOTT, P. 1948 **Rising Twenty** London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- JONES, E. 1975. **Readings in Social Geography**, Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- KENDRICK, S.W., BECHHOFFER, F. & McCRONE, D. 1981. Working Paper 1 for Social Structure of Modern Scotland Project: Demography. Edinburgh University
- KENDRICK, S.W., McCRONE, D. & BECHHOFFER, F. 1984. Working Paper 2 for Social Structure of Modern Scotland Project: Industrial and Occupational Structure. Edinburgh University
- KENDRICK, S.W. 1983. Social Change in Scotland in Brown, G. and Cook, R. **Scotland The Real Divide: Poverty and Deprivation in Scotland** Edinburgh: Mainstream
- KENDRICK, S.W. 1983. **Social Change and Nationalism in Modern Scotland**, Edinburgh University: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis.
- KITZINGER, S. 1981. **Women as Mothers**, Glasgow: Collins & Co. Ltd.
- KLEIN, J. 1965. **Samples from English Cultures Vol I and II**, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- KOMAROVSKY, M. 1967. **Blue Collar Marriage**, New York: Random House Inc.
- LAUER, R. 1981. **Temporal Man: The Meaning and Uses of Social Time** New York: Praeger
- LEACH, E. 1976. **Culture and Communication**, London: Cambridge University Press.
- LEACH, E. R. 1961. **Rethinking Anthropology** London: The University of London, The Athlone Press

- LEFEBVRE, H. 1971. **Everyday Life In The Modern World** Allen Lane; The Penguin Press
- LENMAN, B. 1977. **An Economic History of Modern Scotland 1660 - 1976** London: B. T. Batsford Ltd.
- LERNER, L. 1979. **Love and Marriage: Literature and Its Social Context** Edward Arnold
- LESSING, D. 1979. **The Golden Notebook** St. Albans: Grenada Publishing Ltd.
- LEWIS, J. D., AND WEIGERT, A. J. 1981. **The Structures and Meanings of Social Time in Social Forces** 60: 432 - 62
- LOPATA, H. Z. 1971. **Occupation: Housewife** O.U.P.
- LUXTON, M. 1980. **More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home**, Ontario: Women's Educational Press.
- MCCRINDLE, J. & ROWBOTHAM, S. (eds) 1977. **Dutiful Daughters** Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- MACLAREN, A.A. 1980. **Social Class In Scotland, Past and Present** Edinburgh: John Donald.
- MADIGAN, R. 1983. **Women and Housing in Glasgow Women's Studies Group Unchartered Lives: Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences 1850-1982** Glasgow: Pressgang
- MAINARDI, P. 1971. **The Politics of Housework** Agitprop Info.
- MANNHEIM, K. 1955 **Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge** London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- MARSHALL, T. H. 1970. **Social Policy in the Twentieth Century** London: Hutchinson University Library
- MARTIN, B. 1981. **A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change** Oxford: Basil Blackwell



- MEAD, M. 1970. *Male and Female* Harmondsworth: Penguin
- MEACHAM, S. 1977. *A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914* London
- MILLET, K. 1977. *Sexual Politics* London: Virago Ltd.
- MILLS, C.W. 1973. *The Sociological Imagination*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- MITCHELL, J. 1977. *Woman's Estate* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- MITCHELL, J. & OAKLEY, A. 1977. *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- MODELL, J. et al 1976. Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood: Continuity and Change, 1860-1975 *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (Supp.)
- MOORE, W.E. 1963. *Man, Time and Society* New York: Wiley and Sons Inc.
- MORTON, P. 1970. *Women's Work Is Never Done in Leviathan*, May
- MOUNT, F. 1982. *The Subversive Family*, London: Unwin.
- MURRAY, G. *Records of Falkirk Parish, 1687 - 1888*, Vol. II
- OAKLEY, A. 1974. *The Sociology of Housework*, Bath: Pitman Press.
- OAKLEY, A. 1980. *Sex, Gender and Society* London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd.
- OAKLEY, C.A. (Ed.) 1953. *Scottish Industry* Scottish Council (Development and Industry)
- OPIE, I. and OPIE, P. 1969. *Children's Games in Street and Playground* Clarendon Press. Oxford.



ORAL HISTORY 1977. Women's History Issue, Vol 5, No. 2.

ORAL HISTORY 1975. Family History Issue Vol 3, No 2.

PAHL, R. 1984. Divisions of Labour Oxford: Basil Blackwell

RABB, T.K. and ROTBERG, R.I. 1973. The Family in History, New York: Harper Torchbooks.

RICE, M.S. 1939. Working-class Wives, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

RILEY, D. 1983. The War in the Nursery, London: Virago.

ROADBURG, A. 1985. Ageing: Retirement, Leisure and Work in Canada, Ontario: Methuen.

ROBERTS, E. 1975. Learning and Socialisation Outside School in Oral History Vol 3, No.2

ROBERTS, E. 1984. A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890 - 1940 Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd.

ROTH, J.A. 1963 Timetables Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill

ROWBOTHAM, S. 1979. Woman's Consciousness, Man's World, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

RUBIN, L. 1976 Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family New York: Basic Books

SAFILIOS-ROTHSCHILD, C. 1969. Family Sociology or Wives' family Sociology in Journal of Marriage and the Family 31 (2)

SCHOFIELD, M. 1976. The Sexual Behaviour of Young People Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

<sup>J.R.</sup>SEELEY, <sup>R.A.</sup>SIM & <sup>G.W.</sup>LOOSLEY 1956. Crestwood Heights, London: Constable and Co. Ltd.

SENNETT, R. & COBB, J. 1977. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

SHANAS, E. and STREIB, G.F. 1965. *Social Structure and the Family*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc.

SHARPE, S. 1976. *Just Like A Girl. How Girls Learn to be Women*  
Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

SIMMEL, G. 1969. *Men, Women and Custom in Conflict and the Web of Group Applications*, New York: The Free Press.

SISSONS, P. L. 1973. *The Social Significance of Church Membership in Falkirk*, Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons.

SMART, C. & SMART, B. (EDS). 1978. *Women, Sex and Social Control* Routledge and Kegan Paul.

SMITH-ROSENBERG, C. 1975. *The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between women in nineteenth century America in Signs 1*

STEVENSON, J. 1984. *British Society 1914-45*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

SOROKIN, P.A. 1943. *Socio-Cultural Causality, Space, and Time*  
New York: Russell and Russell

SOROKIN, P.A. and MERTON, R.K. 1937. *Social Time: A Methodological and Functional Analysis in American Journal of Sociology 42: 615 - 29*

SZWED, J. F. 1966. *Private Cultures and Public Imagery in Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies No. 2*

TAYLOR, S. 1977. *The Effect Of Marriage On Job Possibilities for Women and the Ideology of the Home 1890 - 1930 in Oral History, Women's Issue Vol. 5, No. 2.*

THOMPSON, E.P. 1967. *Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism in Past and Present 38: 56 - 97*

- THOMPSON, E.P. 1968. **The Making of the English Working Class**  
Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- THOMPSON, P. 1978. **The Voice of the Past. Oral History**  
Oxford: Oxford University Press
- THOMPSON, P. 1979. **The Edwardians: The remaking of British Society** London: Granada
- THOMPSON, P. 1984. **The Family and Childrearing in Sociology Vol 18: 4: 515-530**
- THRIFT, N. 1979. **On Time in Geography, an exploration of temporal awareness and precept** Bristol: University of Bristol
- TROLLAND BENGSTON, V.L. 1979. **Generations in the Family in Burr, W.R. et al Contemporary Theories About The Family, Vol 1** New York: The Free Press
- TWEEDIE, J. 1980. **In The Name Of Love** St Albans: Granada Publishing Ltd.
- UHLENBERG, P. R. 1974. **Cohort Variations in Family Life Experiences of U.S. Females in Journal of Marriage and the Family 36: 284-292**
- VANSINA, J. 1973. **Oral Tradition**, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- WEIGERT, A. 1981. **Sociology of Everyday Life**, New York: Longman.
- WAINWRIGHT, H. 1978. **Women and The Division of Labour in ABRAMS, P. Work, Urbanism and Inequality: U.K. Society Today**
- WHITE, C. 1970. **Women's magazines 1963 - 1968: A Sociological Study**
- WELDON, F. 1973. **Down Among The Women** Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

**WILLIS, P. 1978. Learning To Labour, Farnborough: Saxon House.**

**WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP 1978. Women Take Issue, London: Hutchinson.**

**YOUNG, M. & WILLMOTT, P. 1971. Family and Kinship in East London Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.**

**YOUNG, M. 1975. The Symmetrical Family, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.**

**ZARETSKY, E. 1976. Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life, London: Pluto Press.**

**ZERUBAVEL, E. 1981. Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calenders in Social Life Chicago: University of Chicago Press**



**Hidden Rhythms: Hidden Powers?**

**Women and Time in Working-Class Culture**

**Pat Straw and Brian Elliott**

**University of Edinburgh  
Department of Sociology  
18 Buccleuch Place  
Edinburgh EH8 9LN**

## Introduction

Sociology and history are both concerned with temporal aspects of social life - with recurrent patterns of social behaviour and with processes of change - but it is a curious fact that serious discussions of 'time' are only rarely found in these disciplines. To be sure, lip-service is paid to the idea that time provides an elemental framework for human affairs but as Lauer (1981) observes, "actual research fails to incorporate the temporal dimension". Time, because it is ever present is simply taken for granted (Zerubavel 1981). It ought not to be.

Of course, some appreciation of the significance of time has been evident from an early point in the development of the social sciences. For example, we find it in the work of Durkheim at the turn of the century (Durkheim 1912), and in the work of Sorokin and Merton during the thirties and forties (Sorokin and Merton 1937, Sorokin 1943) where they sketched some of the ways in which we might study and comprehend temporal matters. In some of the classic writings of British social anthropology, such as Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), we find not only descriptions of time-reckoning which appear to be very different from our own but also perceptive commentary on the general relationships between temporal structures and social structures. More recently we find in history, anthropology and sociology a small number of valiant efforts to advance our understanding of time and hortatory remarks about the need to develop these (de Grazia 1962, Moore 1963, Gurwitsch 1964,

Thompson 1967, 1968, Leach 1971, Abrams 1972, Geertz 1973, Bertaux, 1981).

At the heart of all the systematic discussions of time, we find a basic distinction between 'physical' or 'astronomical' time and 'social time'. Obviously, it is the latter that ought to be the focus of historical and sociological curiosity. Sorokin and Merton highlighted this point,

We see then that systems of time reckoning reflect the social activities of the group. Their springs of initiation are collective; their continued observance is demanded by social necessity. They arise from the round of group life, are largely determined by the routine of religious activity and the occupational order of the day, are perpetuated by the need for social co-ordination, and are essentially a product of social interaction. (Sorokin and Merton: 620)

In today's modern industrial society our commonplace understandings of time are dominated by the mechanical measurement of seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, months and years, and the use of these precise units to organise our activities. Many have pointed out that the development of western society, particularly in its industrial capitalist phase, has brought with it ever more precise and binding periodicities. These make possible the co-ordination of complex activities especially in our productive systems and the rhythms of our factories, offices and schools impose themselves on the rest of our lives. Thus, we can usefully talk, as Lewis and Weigert (1981) do about 'organisational time'. Non-work time is then seen as residual, as

something left over after we have fulfilled the important obligations of our jobs and of the formal organisations in which we participate. There is obviously truth in this; but it is a partial truth.

Our tendency to think about time principally in relation to work is part of a general bias in our efforts to describe and analyse the kind of societies in which we live. Sociologists stress the rational and instrumental characteristics of industrial societies. They devote a great deal of effort to studying work places, particularly those which are large, bureaucratically structured and technically sophisticated. Their theories impress upon us the determining influences of systems of production. The objects of their study, at least until recently, have generally been men. This leads to a distortion of our images of such societies and to a gross neglect of many aspects of social life which lie outside the work place. Critical awareness of this is is beginning to appear. For example, Granovetter (1984) points to the disproportionate attention paid to large enterprises and the effects of this on our understanding of work processes and labour markets; Gershuny (1978, 1983) and Pahl (1984) and others, looking at the impacts of technical change and recession, show how the nature of work itself is changing; and, of course, the women's movement has forced us to explore more seriously than before the role of women in the workforce and in the home. This kind of awareness should lead us to question taken-for-granted views about the dominance of 'organisational time' and compel us

to look in particular at the significance of women as the active agents in the shaping of 'social time'.

Alongside the rhythms and routines dictated by the work-place there exists something that we call 'family time' or 'domestic time', a distinctive patterning of a large area of social life in which affective and expressive activity is intimately mingled with, rather than separated from, instrumental roles. In the last few years changes in the nature of western economies have served to reveal the importance of 'non-work time' and, more precisely, of 'family time'. Most workers, certainly most manual workers, have experienced some reduction in the hours they spend in formal employment, so-called flexi-time has allowed a good many to exercise a minimal discretion over the time they spend at work. Changes in technology have made possible the dispersal of some economic activities so that part of the job may be done at home and most important of all, for the working-class, unemployment has left millions without the externally imposed rhythms of shifts or nine to five routines. As this has happened and as sociologists have begun to explore the world of the 'informal economy' or the lives of women so the salience of a temporal order which has always been there, paralleling that of the work-place, becomes more obvious. We shall try to explore this countervailing temporal order by using material from life history interviews with a sample of ninety-three working-class women in Scotland, a localised multi-generational group. It is an order which is 'femi-centric' - which reflects the distinctiveness of female



roles and responsibilities. From it women derive security, identity and power.

### The distinctiveness of women's experience of time

Women have a different sense of time from men which derives in part, but only in part, from biology. Physically girls develop earlier than boys. Puberty occurs some two to three years earlier among females, as does the accompanying 'growth spurt'. From puberty to menopause, menstruation and the complex biochemical rhythms which it involves gives a tempo to a female's life which a male cannot know. The menopause itself brings a specific and obvious end to one phase and signals the start of another in a woman's personal history.

One's sexual and sex role development bear heavily on one's perception of time. Women, for example, know that their childbearing period begins with the onset of menstruation; men experience no clear-cut commencement of a period of childbearing years. They learn only that at some point in time sexual potency increases, that at another time it diminishes, and that at still a later point may cease altogether. (Cottle 1976: 182)

These biological rhythms have considerable sociological significance. They do not determine, but they condition: they condition experience and perception and they provide elemental bases for identity and commonality, for the diverse bonds of sisterhood and brotherhood that can be found across the range of human societies. Timperano writes,

To maintain that since the "biological" is always presented to us as mediated by the "social", the "biological" is nothing and the "social" is everything, would . . . be idealist sophistry. (Timperano: 16 quoted in Massey: 52)

Always we find that upon the biological rhythms each culture imposes a set of social conventions which mark out phases of social development for the individual and these stages, though similar for males and females, are not precisely the same. Childhood, as a period of dependency, ends earlier for girls than for boys; so too on average, does the stage of adolescence or spinsterhood. Mostly women marry younger than men and with childbirth assume a range of tasks temporally bound to the needs of infants and children. Commonly in our culture, it is women who take on the responsibilities of caring for the needs of ageing parents and that too has a degree of predictability about it in terms of the point in the life cycle at which it will occur, as well as its own mundane rhythms. If we think about the roles and the status passages of males and females, it is obvious that they are not neatly synchronised.

Males and females somehow acquire or are taught to have a different sense of and feel for time. This comes in part from the distinctive sequences described above but also from the fact that a female's sense of time is continuous throughout life in a way which a male's is not. For small children, time connected with the home and family is the most important time, the most secure time. It assumes priority. These feelings tend to remain much the same for girls in later socialisation because they continue to



remain closely identified with the realm of home and family. However, this is not the case for boys because they are encouraged to distance themselves early from this 'world of loving' so that in later life they will have no difficulty in leaving it to play their main roles in the world of work with its limited opportunities for expressive, affective action and its pervasive clock time.

The interview materials provide much evidence of those temporal patterns which seem to have been common in the lives of working-class women. The Scottish sample because it is drawn from an area of declining heavy industry and because it contains deliberately selected multi-generational families will tend to accentuate features that may less frequently be found today in, say, south-east England, but we think those features have been, and are even now, widespread.

To take an example of the kind of pattern that sets women apart from men we need only think of the abbreviation of childhood and the assumption, often at a very early age, of a range of adult responsibilities. In large families where mothers are overburdened or in those families where a parent dies or is absent or ill, it falls to girls to take on the tasks of childminding. Not infrequently they also undertake cooking, cleaning, washing and shopping, for their own immediate families. Occasionally they carry out similar tasks for grandparents, aunts and uncles or others in the kinship network (Glasgow Women's Study Group, 1983).

Mrs. Robertson (45) who grew up during the Second World War, said,

I did all the groceries, m' mother couldn't have told y' one coupon from another in the ration books, and I was only about eight at the time.

Mrs. Willis (63) who had a family of eight but worked long hours in a shop said of her eldest daughter,

Oh aye, Mary ... she was the boss o' them all. She kept all the little 'uns in their place. Mary done all the housework. She was the boss from the time she was about seven.

No doubt these patterns are less common now than a generation or two ago - after all, families are smaller and, on the whole, healthier, but such patterns are far from extinct. Two things about them deserve particular comment.

First, the fact that from an early age women stand at the intersection of different sorts of time. Their caring for siblings and other domestic duties bring into conflict two different types of time. We see clearly the demands of 'family time' clashing with those of 'organisational time' in the form of the school schedule.

Mrs. Allison (44) recalls,

Whenever m' mother had a baby I had t' stay off school f' a month. I lost a lot o' education. I had t' stay off a month at a time, t' help with everything that was going on in the house ... cooking, washing, scrubbing. I did that f' I was about eight year old. In fact, I've done things since I was younger.

Similarly Mrs. McDonald (56) remarked,

My school report said, "She does her best but lower marks this term because she lost so many months schooling". That's when m' mother was ill. Well, I just couldn't go t' the school. In fact I had t' run up t' sit the exam and come running back home straight after it.

Mrs. MacKenzie (42), eldest surviving daughter of a family of twelve said,

Every so often I was off the school t' watch the others, t' let m' mother get the washing done. I was off one day a week or one day a fortnight.

We frequently find that the 'stratification of time', as Lewis and Weigert (1981) call it, is not ordered hierarchically in what they take to be the usual way. 'Family time' may well take precedence over 'organisational time' -- the externally and formally determined demands of the education system may well rank below the domestic ones. This is merely the earliest of many points in a woman's life where 'family time' will take priority over the time frames of formal institutions.

Secondly, we see how the early assumption of these domestic roles binds very young females into a set of family and kinship relations which, in the case of most working-class women, will

continue to have importance throughout their lives. The strength of these ties must stem in part from the very early assumption of quasi-adult roles and entry to an affectively charged network that constitutes the 'world of women'. It is a world in which a child develops a sharp sense of the periodicity of the female life history, for status within it attaches to being 'a married woman', 'a mother', or 'a grandmother'. It is also a world therefore in which a sense of 'generational time' grows up. Alongside the consciousness of the recurrent sequences enjoined by domestic chores, there grows an awareness of that specifically female family history that binds the generations together.

And despite the fact that there now exists a welfare state that undertakes many of the tasks once accomplished by the family it is not the case that these multi-generational ties between women are destined to disappear. Far from it. The kinds of demographic change which Anderson considers (Anderson 1984) enable us to see that multi-generational families and the potential for extensive inter-generational links, particularly on the female side, are increasing. Demographically it is the case that women live longer than men, have usually married men older than themselves and have become parents at a younger age than their partners. Therefore, there are more of them around for longer, and consequently they have the opportunity to develop a great many intergenerational bonds and in many ways can expect to have far greater impact than men on new generations.



### Women and 'non-recurrent' or 'generational' time

It was Leach (1971), following on from the work of Evans-Pritchard, who made the distinction between recurrent and non-recurrent time. We are all aware that like all living things we are born, mature, grow old and die; that we have a life cycle and that this is irreversible. The sequence is immutable; the stages cannot be repeated. Among women there is a highly developed consciousness of and engagement with non-recurrent time and, under this all-embracing label, with what we will call 'generational' time.

It is not difficult to explain why women should have a sharper appreciation of this than men, for it is women who give birth to new life and particularly in working-class communities, it is women who are most intimately connected with the management of the crucial events that mark the stages of the life-cycle, from the cradle to the grave. Traditionally, at least, births, marriages and deaths were matters over which women exercised collective control (Chamberlain and Richardson, 1981). At each of these points women were drawn together in a co-operative intergenerational network. Until the creation of the National Health Service, it was common to find one or two women, usually older women and often in the family, playing the role of midwives, giving help and advice in the various stages of pregnancy and attending and managing the actual birth. Quite a few of the Scottish respondents had had their babies delivered by their own mothers or grandmothers who acted as 'midwives' in the

community. Similarly, at the other end of the life-cycle, death was a matter for women. We have yet to come across an instance in accounts of working-class culture where a man laid out the dead, washed and dressed the corpse or organised the rituals of mourning and burial. Though today much of this has been 'professionalised' and it may be a man who contacts the undertaker, nevertheless it will almost certainly be women who attend most intimately to the care of the dying, women who summon the family and provide the funeral food and drink.

Coping with births, deaths and illnesses is 'women's work' and the discharging of these responsibilities cements the bonds between women, grandmothers and great-aunts, mothers and their sisters and the daughters of the younger generation. Major life events thus take their meaning from the fact that women are enmeshed in a series of social ties between the generations. This gives women a different orientation to and perspective on time.

To a much greater extent than men, women are part of an age-graded structure where each grade has specific responsibilities for the care, tutelage and control of others. However, this system is not simply hierarchical but rather cyclical in character. The daughter becomes the mother of her parents as they slip into infirmity and old age. Few things demonstrate better this care, tutelage and control of women by women than the business of marriage. Mothers and grandmothers in particular

offer advice and guidance in no uncertain terms to young women about to be married. More than this, they go to considerable lengths to try to strictly control the selection of mates. This was illustrated very well by one of the respondents, Mrs. Wells (46), when telling of her trials and tribulations with her 'gran' during her teenage years,

M' grandma, m' mother's mother, used t' have a lot to do w' courtin'. She was a meddler, a meddler in everything. She found out everybody's back history and she actually controlled her family. There was always something, anybody y' went out w' there was a wee story attached t' them. She managed t' find out cos she knew an awful lot o' people and she used t' make it her job t' find out ... and she used t' pass it on t' m' mother.

Connected with this, we can also point out in this section that embedded as they are in a trans-generational network, women become the gatekeepers of family and community history, who erect 'structures of perceiving' for future generations. The past is held in check by women so that what is seen to be embarrassing, degrading or a family weakness, that which does not fit in, is 'forgotten', not talked about, with such topics ranging from getting into debt to epilepsy. Mrs. McDonald (56) related this tale,

I remember m' Mum going w' cardboard in the sole of her shoe and y' could o' seen y' face in the top o' them they were so well polished ... And we met the minister and he stopped and spoke t' m' Mum ... and this other woman ... came past ... and she was filthy. The minister walked over and he handed her a threepenny bit and he came back and said, "I feel so sorry for them, they've got nothing". Now I wasn't supposed to hear anything, m' Mum had never said a word ... she must have forgotten I was in the kitchen ... I heard her saying t' Dad, "Fancy,

that was old Ross giving that woman threepence. I wonder what he'd o' said if I'd shown him the soles o' m' shoes and what was in my purse?"

When Mrs. McDonald's daughter was specifically asked about the above anecdote, she said quite definitely that she had never heard of it.

No. I don't think even Mum would talk about these days to us really.

These silences are eloquent, for as the women unwittingly construct their histories of the family, neighbourhood, community and class, they 'tidy them up', make them altogether neater than they really are. Order and respectability are maintained through convenient omissions. The effect is to transmit through these fragments of times past, these isolated recollections of family and local events, a moral order. The transmission of moral rules takes place through the symbols and the silences in often retold stories. In working-class areas women are the main custodians of these and what matters is not only what is passed on explicitly from mother to daughter or grandmother to granddaughter: what is left unsaid also counts. Interviewing several generations of women from the same family reveals that an astonishing amount is left unsaid. Many of the most profound 'silences' relate to issues of fundamental importance in the lives of women - menstruation, contraception, childbirth, abortion - all matters of women's sexuality. The bonds between the generations of women seem to consist, in part, in the collective keeping of female



'secrets', secrets understood less by instruction than by inference from the silences. Similarly, Roberts notes,

. . . the women respondents said they were very close to their mothers, and somehow the scant shared knowledge about female 'secrets' cemented this bond, which almost always proved to be of lifelong duration. (Roberts: 18-19)

For the working-class women in our sample the things which gave structure and texture to their lives were family events: marriages and births, weddings and divorces, illnesses and bereavements. All of these served to establish and maintain links, intergenerational links, among the women and an appreciation of a sequenced life course.

#### Women and recurrent time

Aside from 'generational time', though, we can see in the lives of these women other time frames and rhythms, some short, some long. The short intervals reflect the basic economic and social needs of family life which dictate that certain activities must be repeated at brief intervals. Thus, the organisation of childcare, shopping, cleaning, washing and cooking requires a temporal structure and that structure is almost entirely the responsibility of women, whether they are in outside paid employment or not.

Women's power to shape the order of events, of course, operates within the constraints of external 'organisational time'.

Husbands may work shifts, young adults have other factory or office routines; the women themselves may have paid jobs, children have school time to conform to, and shops, post offices, doctors' surgeries and government agencies have their own opening and closing hours. These impose important boundaries, but within them the most important decisions about time are made by women.

Women have a great deal of control over how time is spent by themselves and by other members of their families. As Moore writes (Moore 1963),

It is essentially the wife and mother who ... tends to assert familial claims on discretionary time and to assign and rearrange the use of the current temporal inventory. The decisional power of husbands is certainly variable between families, ethnic groups, 'classes' and societies, but the very temporal commitments of wives within the family tend to give them considerable authority in allocating and directing the time of others. (Moore: 55)

Moreover, women can shape the temporal order in many working-class households because, quite simply, their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons are often not there. Just as one can explain the assumption of specific domestic responsibilities in this way (Crook 1982) so too women's control over time is gained by default and by necessity. Because of very long hours at work, shiftwork, working away on the railways, the boats, the rigs, because of illness and accidents resulting from hazardous occupations and ultimately because of untimely death, men have very often not been present to help mould 'family time'. Unemployment, of course,

changes this but, as Jahoda and her colleagues (Jahoda 1972) pointed out in their classic study, workless men feel disoriented once the rhythms of the factory or the mine are taken away whereas their wives maintain the rituals of regularity and routine that accompany their tasks. We know of no evidence that men on the dole suddenly take on any major organising role with respect to 'family time'. Certainly from the interviews carried out with working-class women in Scotland, the husband typically seemed to play little part in shaping non-work time, even if he was around.

It was the women who had that responsibility, that power, overseeing both the internal and external timetables of their families. Within the house it is mainly women who decide who is to do what and when; but they also determine, to a large extent, how outside time demands, in terms of leisure, are accommodated to fit in with the rhythms of family life. Anne Jamieson illustrated this point well while talking about her mother and father.

M' mother and father have separate social lives which a lot o' folk go on about. They say that shouldna be if you're a married couple. He goes doon to Carronshore, doon t' the Club doon there cos he's a member, whereas m' mother's a member in Stenhousemuir. 'N' she a'wa's goes there on a Friday night 'n' m' father goes doon there cos he's got the snooker doon there y' see 'n' m' mother's a bling fanatic. An' it's her that encourages m' father right enough. She likes t' be a'wa' f' him f' a while, get some peace and have a drink w' me 'n' the girls. (our emphasis)

It is the women who are expected to resolve competing temporal demands and to construct and oversee the domestic schedule. In a

sense this responsibility can be seen as a major burden. Indeed, many women will describe the sense of harassment that it may cause as they try to reconcile the competing time demands of a diverse and growing family. But these complaints reflect, in a way, the 'cares of office' for they are most likely to be heard at precisely that point in a woman's life (in her middle age) when she has the greatest, the widest responsibility for 'family time'. Control over family time is a kind of power, the acquisition and development of which is conditioned by the life cycle stages and by position within a family. Eldest daughters, or daughters who stay in the area, daughters who marry and have children, seem to reach by their forties a point where they will often have continuing control over the time schedules of their children and husbands, together with growing responsibility for the well-being of ageing parents, especially mothers, and even grandparents. Their 'power' is at a peak then. As they move into old age, though some may still exert some 'matriarchal' influence on their daughters, they play a much less active role in the shaping of family time.

But at this point we should look more closely at specific examples of recurrent time patterns.

#### Daily Patterns

Set meal times are perhaps the best example of this in daily routine. Working-class families tend to eat at least one meal together, if not more. This is often the evening meal, more



usually referred to as 'tea', and not infrequently also the midday meal referred to as 'dinner'. This means that none of the family strays too far away during the course of the day and it singles out a time when people are expected, within this context if nowhere else, to say what they have been doing during the day and what they plan to do for the rest of the day. It is as much a time for talking, or even interrogating and explaining, as it is for eating. Meals also have the universal significance of symbolising 'solidarity' or friendship and equality so that physical or temporal segregation at meal times usually implies some kind of social gradation or social distance. An example of this would be father sitting at the head of the table and being served first, signifying his supposed importance as head of the household in terms of sex, age and wage-earning power. However, we must be careful here, as in a good many of these temporal examples, not to read too much into such occasions because frequently the women from large families in the past spoke of two sittings at meal times, but these symbolised nothing more than the simple fact that it was impossible to seat, say, ten children and two adults round one table. Alice Reid, one of ten children, said, ,

Dad, I must admit, came first, always. Yes, he always came first 'n' ... er ... the table was set ... well, in our house wi' having a big family there was two sittings, y' know, sort o' two sittings ... maybe half o' them'd be sitting at dinner, either that or the young ones'd be fed first 'n' then the table cleared away, out t' play 'n' then m' dad 'n' mother'd eat.

Another salient daily pattern is that of daily visiting among kinfolk, particularly between mothers and daughters. This is still prominent in working-class communities because mothers and daughters still for the most part live reasonably close to each other and rely much less on practical help offered by formal institutions than that from kin. Highly personalised bonds are positively preferred when assistance with matters such as money or children is needed. A great many of the women in the sample from the early 1980s still lived within a few streets of their mothers and/or daughters, and several even lived in the same house, a situation quite like that found by Young and Willmott in the Bethnal Green of thirty years ago.

Ella Lewis, who was 63 and whose husband still worked, had a daughter who was a widow, who had a family of her own, a house of her own and a full-time driving job on school meals but she made a point of calling in on her still very active mother at least once a day. As Ella said,

Well, when she's on the bottom run she comes up when she's finished. That's like down this way. When she's on the bottom run she comes up f' her dinner. She's just in about half an hour f' her dinner. She comes in and I maybe have a salad or boiled egg or poached egg or something like that ... but when she's on the top run ... I don't see her till she's finished about half past two ... I see her every day.

Young and Willmott remark upon this particular temporal aspect of daily life,

The daily lives of many women are not confined to the places where they sleep; they are spread over two or more households, in each of which they regularly spend part of their time.

And even if mothers and daughters are not physically present at one or the other's house every day, we found that a certain kind of presence is frequently maintained by very lengthy conversations on the 'phone or if the women happened to be amateur radio enthusiasts, as they were in one of the families we interviewed, on the 'rig'. Christine Fletcher lived about a mile down the road from her Mum and they saw each other at least four times a week but she pointed out,

I speak to Mum on the rig for a good long time practically every night.

### Weekly Patterns

Regular weekly visits often supplement the sometimes haphazard day-to-day popping in and out. Weekly visits are more 'formal' than the daily contacts, being routinely set for more or less exact times when other female members of the family will also certainly be there. Christine Fletcher, who has just been mentioned, sees her mother and two sisters every Wednesday at twelve o'clock, and another respondent, Mrs. Richardson, remarked,

Well, I'm at m' mother's every Wednesday in life and m' sisters are there ... and I see her on Friday and in between usually on a Sunday.

It seems to be the case that the visiting of kin who are slightly further removed in the generational system takes place on a regular weekly basis rather than a daily one. To quote Christine Fletcher once more,

I used t' work in Havelocks, in Falkirk, as a receptionist and that was just over the road from where m' gran stayed so every Friday I would nip over just to keep her company at dinner time.

This pattern of visiting, connecting the generations, begins in childhood and carries on through life,

Well, once a week we all went round to gran'ma's. Every week in life. (Mrs. Short)

Often this visiting of grandparents or aunts and uncles took place on Sundays which helped to give them their special character. But, of course, Sundays were different for a much more profound reason. To judge from the accounts of these generations of women, Sundays were observed as 'holy days', as days quite unlike others, until very recently. Children went to Sunday school, they wore different clothes and they were not allowed to play games outside. It was unusual for any housework other than washing the dishes to be done on Sunday. This necessarily meant that a lot of housework was done towards the end of the week, on Fridays and Saturdays, so that the house would be spick and span for the holy day.



Housework surely provides the best-known example of periodicity and temporal sequence in everyday life and plainly one of the factors that helped shape its rhythms was the existence of the Sabbath. Weekly work patterns of a rigid nature have been in force for a very long time and have certainly existed in broadly similar form since the industrial revolution. They are definitely beginning to break down but in the lives of all but the most recent generation in the Scottish sample we could see just what Rosemark Crook observed among her Rhondda women of the thirties and forties.

There was an order about every part of housework and a 'set' day for each task ... there was a general acceptance that major tasks such as washing should be done on a specific day (almost always Monday or Tuesday) ... ironing and breadmaking would be done on Tuesday, the upstairs rooms cleaned on Wednesdays, more baking on Thursday and the mats beaten and parlour cleaned on Friday.  
(Crook: 42)

One of the Scottish respondents summed up this weekly roundabout of time, tasks and atmospheres rather succinctly when she remarked that,

Monday was washing and Sunday was bad temper.

The temporal order thus created is invested with moral force. Within families, groups of neighbours and indeed whole communities, the rhythms of domestic life are matters of prime importance. Powerful norms grow up about when particular activities 'ought' to be performed, the most widely acknowledged

being that washing was done on a Monday and never on a Sunday. Even nowadays washing on a Sunday is looked upon disdainfully,

Billy's granny'll say, "y're not washing on a Sunday, Betty, that's no right". She said that a few weeks ago. (Mrs. Palmerston)

### Yearly Patterns

These housework patterns were traditionally writ large in the form of distinct annual patterns, not just in 'spring cleaning' but certainly among the older women in the practice of cleaning the house for the beginning of a new year in much the same way that it had to be cleaned for a new week. This was symbolised by the fact that the last thing to be done in the old year was to take out the ashes from the fireplace just before the start of the new year, so that no speck of dust remained.

Other yearly patterns revolved around annual events, some to do with the family and some to do with the community. The latter would be occasions like Whit walks and harvest festivals; the former occasions like Christmas, New Year, birthdays and holidays, times when the extended family would be gathered together. A common comment throughout the interviews went,

Of course, every Christmas we were together at m' mother's. And New Year was brought in at her house.

The family events, of course, are still common. On these occasions men are usually present as well as women and children but it is still largely the women who keep these traditional gatherings in full flow by arranging the details of them, like the food, between themselves, and in the case of birthdays or anniversaries, by remembering them in the first place.

Another annual affair is the family holiday be it for a fortnight, a week, a weekend or even just a day,

At the same time, Falkirk holidays, every year we went to Ayr, mum, dad, grandma, grandad, uncles and aunts and cousins. When we went on the beach we were all one big, happy family. (Mrs. Wells)

'One big happy family' surviving quite well in an atmosphere of considerable equality, comfort and happiness - that is what the periodic family gatherings are intended to express and despite the numerous stories, some funny, some sad, about family disagreements that occasionally break out, there is no doubt that these are special and very important family times.

### Conclusion

These daily, weekly, yearly patterns reflect what has often been observed: the 'respectable' working-class live, as Bernice Martin puts it,

... highly structured and ritualised lives, permeated and punctuated by the ordinary daily symbolism of outside/inside and of role and status demarcations ...

where

... control, order and respect for the proper boundaries are spiritual and psychological necessities . . . (Martin: 55)

What has been less frequently remarked upon is the fact that this 'culture of control' is one in which temporal aspects are vital. And one over which women have considerable power. So why do women go to such lengths to structure activities in this way?

We can point first to the fact that since industrial production had at its core precise timing patterns which had to be adhered to by the labour force, workers had to become orderly and disciplined to fit in with the rhythms of the machines which provided their bread and butter. Women controlled domestic time but in ways which were consistent with the over-arching requirements of capitalist production. Today we could update this kind of argument by pointing out that now there is another external factor to be considered. Poverty and unemployment bring a new dependence upon the strictly timed distribution of state benefits. In the houses of the poor we hear the clicking of the state's clock.

Secondly, it has to be recognised that most workers and their families have lived in home environments that were poor and cramped. Twenty years ago Mollie Harrington explained the link between spatial restriction and temporal patterns, when she wrote about the experience of working-class families living in one or



two-roomed flats that housed most Scottish workers.

The alternative to separation of functions in space, which is taken for granted in modern houses, is separation in time ... Management of time becomes supremely important; there can be little margin between meticulous order and chaos ... The admired and respected housewife is invariably someone who maintains control of time and keeps a high standard of cleanliness ... The one who maintains standards claims strong group support because, where the battle against chaos can never be relaxed, the one who does 'let things go' supplies at once a warning and a temptation. (Harrington 1965)

The salience of time then in the lives of working-class women reflects the fact that time is more malleable, more controllable than other things.

Thirdly, and most generally, we can see that the industrial working-class has had to create order and meaning out of conditions of scarcity and precariousness. Their's is a world in which most things have been, and in most still are, in short supply: tangible things like money, food, and space; intangible ones like dignity and diversion. Working-class families live continuously with insecurity - with the possibility of job loss, of injury or illness or premature death - and they have to live with this to a much greater extent than middle-class families do.

Much of the orderliness, the routinisation of working-class life can be seen as an attempt to hold chaos at bay, to provide a measure of security in a very uncertain world and to create opportunities for sociability and enjoyment. Women are the

principal architects of this protective temporal structure. Women organise family time so that the social bonds of family, community and class can be maintained. These social ties have, after all, proved the only really reliable defences against misfortune in times past. It is important therefore constantly to renew them, to induct youngsters into the family networks and, in the case of girls, into the intergenerational world of women.

This is no solemn affair. What comes across from the interviews is the fact that these working-class women, though their lives have almost always been hard, have retained their spirit for fun and enjoyment, for 'having a laugh'. Mrs. Macdonald's recollection of her childhood makes the point.

M' Mum was a beautiful dancer. It was natural in her I think ... I remember on winter's nights, y' know, y' weren't out t' play because it was too cold and y'd nothing to do, we'd come in quite miserable ... and Mum would say, "Well go and tell Dorothy Swanson, Annie Gray, and Ella Leuchars. Go and get them up and I'll teach y' a few steps o' the Highland Fling". 'N' when we'd come back up the carpets were all rolled away, the shiny linoleum was every place and y' all stood in a row ... We used t' have great fun, really great fun, y' know. Oh she did that regularly for us ...

The importance of such things has been grasped and expressed in a perceptive piece by Csikszentmihalyi,

Genuine expressive models are essential for socialisation to be effective. Without them, there is no reason for youth to want to be adults. The continuity of a culture, with its values, its institutions, and its roles, is assured only so long as each rising generation can be convinced that it's worth growing up. In this sense enjoyment is the basic ... unit of imitation that

must be passed on if a given social system is to survive over time... It is important to know how a society produces its means of subsistence, but it might be more important to know what pleasures it can give its members. (1981)

Enquire about that matter and you are led to the world of women and to a temporal order in which they, not men, have power.

# References

- ABRAMS, P. 1972. Being and Becoming in Sociology. University of Durham.
- ABRAMS, P. 1982. Historical Sociology. Bath: Pitman Press.
- ANDERSON, M. 1985. The Emergence of the Modern Life Cycle in Britain Social History Vol. 10: No. 1: 69-87.
- BERTAUX, D. (Ed.) 1981. Biography and Society. The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences. New York: Sage Publications Inc.
- CHAMBERLAIN, M. and RICHARDSON, R. Life and Death Oral History 11:1 31-43.
- COTTE, T.J. 1976. Perceiving Time: A Psychological Investigation of Men and Women. New York: Wiley and Sons.
- CROOK, R. 1982. 'Tidy Women'. Women in the Rhondda between the Wars, Oral History 10:2.
- CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. 1981. Leisure and Socialization Social Forces 60:332-340.
- GLASGOW WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP 1983. Uncharted Lives. Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences, 1850-1982. Glasgow: Pressgang.
- de GRAZIA, S. 1962. Of Time, Work and Leisure. New York: Anchor Books.



DURKHEIM, E. 1912. Les formes elementaires de la vie religieuse: Le systeme totemique en Australie. Paris: Alcan.

EVANS-PRITCHARD, E.E. 1940. The Nuer. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GEERTZ, C. 1973. Person, time and conduct. In his The Interpretation of Cultures. U.S.A.: Basic Books Inc.

GERSHUNY, J. 1978. After Industrial Society: The Emerging Self-Service Economy. London: Macmillan.

GERSHUNY, J. 1983. Social Innovation and the Division of Labour. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GRANOVETTER, M. 1984. Small is bountiful: labour markets and establishment size. American Sociological Review 49: 323-34.

GURVITCH, G. 1964. The Spectrum of Time. Dordrecht - Holland: D. Reider.

HAREVEN, T.K. 1982. Family Time and Industrial Time. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HARRINGTON, M. 1963. Resettlement and Self-Image Human Relations 18: 115-37.

JAHODA, M., LAZARSFELD, P., ZEISEL, H. 1972. Marienthal: The Sociology of an unemployed community. London: Tavistock.

LAUER, R. 1981. Temporal Man: the Meaning and Uses of Social Time. New York: Praeger.

LEACH, E. 1971. Rethinking Anthropology. London: Athlone Press.

LEWIS, J.D., WEIGERT, A.J. 1981. The Structures and Meanings of Social time. Social Forces 60: 432-62.

MARTIN, B. 1981. A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change. Oxford: Basic Blackwell.

MASSEY, D. 1984. Spatial Divisions of Labour. Social Structures and the Geography of Production. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Educational Ltd.

MOORE, W.E. 1963. Man, Time and Society. New York: Wiley.

PAHL, E. 1984. Divisions of Labour. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

ROBERTS, E. 1984. A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

SOROKIN, P.A. 1943. Socio-cultural Causality, Space and Time. New York: Russell and Russell.

SOROKIN, P.A., MERTON, R.K. 1937. Social Time: A Methodological and Functional Analysis. American Journal of Sociology. 42: 615-29.

STRAW, P. 1985. Times of Their Lives: A Century of Working-Class Women. Submitted as Edinburgh University Ph.D. Thesis.

THOMPSON, E.P. 1967. Time, work-discipline and industrial

capitalism. Past and Present. 38: pp.56-97.

THOMPSON, E.P. 1968. The Making of the English Working Class.  
Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

THOMPSON, P. 1978. The Voice of the Past Oral History. Oxford:  
Oxford University Press.

YOUNG AND WILLNOTT 1965. Family and Kinship in East London.  
London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

ZERUBAVEL, E. 1981. Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in  
Social Life. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.